

April/May 1986
\$3.50

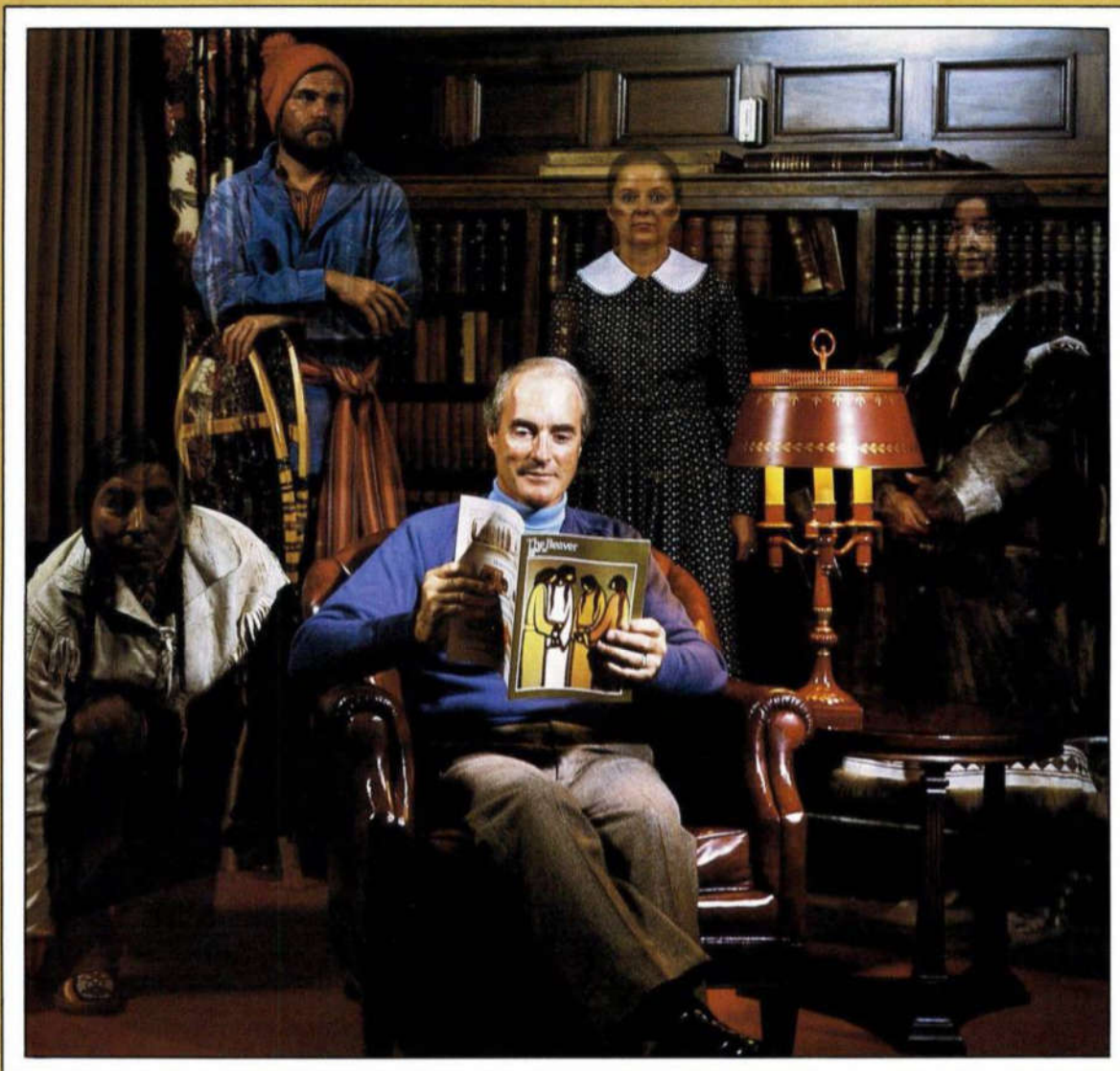
The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY

1757—
Year of Tragedy
1871—
Year of Decision



A Timeless Gift



Photographed at the Manitoba Club, Winnipeg

For the armchair adventurer
or the art lover, historian, collector . . .
or almost anyone with an interest
in the past and present
of this northern country and its people . . .

A gift that is new six times every year;
that will be preserved and enjoyed in years to come.

The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Subscription rate: \$18 year for 6 issues

77 Main Street, Winnipeg, Man. R3C 2R1

The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY

April/May 1986
Vol. 66:2
Issued March 1986
\$3.50

Editor:
Christopher Dafoe
Managing Editor:
Carol Preston

Cover:
Chief Trader
McDonald descending
the Fraser, 1828, by
A. Sherriff Scott.
(See page 60).

Published bi-monthly
by
**Hudson's Bay
Company**
Hudson's Bay House
77 Main Street
Winnipeg, Canada
R3C 2R1

Published by The Governor and
Company of Adventurers of
England Trading into Hudson's
Bay, known as the Hudson's Bay
Company. The interests of THE
BEAVER cover the territory
with which the Company has
been or is now associated.
Annual subscription (6 issues)
\$18 (Canada and United States).
Single Copy \$3.50. Other
countries annual subscription
\$24. While every care will be
taken of manuscripts and
illustrations submitted, no
liability will be assumed for loss.
Contents copyright. Printed in
Canada.

Second class mail registration
number 1401. Postage paid in
Winnipeg.
© 1986 Hudson's Bay Company
ISSN 0005-7517

4 ADVENTURERS AT THE CROSSROADS

At momentous meetings in 1871 the future of the Hudson's Bay Company was charted.
BY ARTHUR J. RAY

13 THE CHASTELY VOLUPTUOUS WEBLINGS

These charming English girls enchanted a generation of Canadians with their
uplifting stage presentations.
BY BETTY C. KELLER

19 ARMOURER JOHN MILES AT MOOSE FORT

A celebrated American gunsmith served a harsh apprenticeship at James Bay.
BY MICHAEL D. WOODS

27 WHERE FLOWERS FOREVER BLOOM

A Victorian artist on the West Coast.
BY JOHN HAYMAN

36 1757 — YEAR OF FAILURE AND TRAGEDY

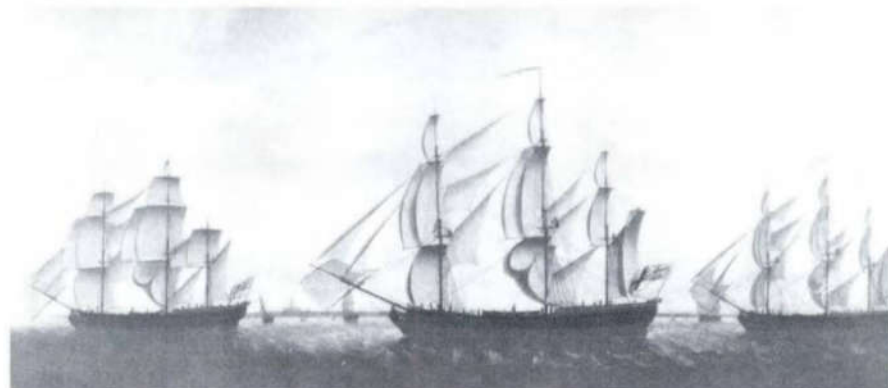
Typhus wins another battle as France and England strive for supremacy.
BY BOYCE RICHARDSON

47 FLOOD WARNINGS

In 1826 and 1852 floods threatened the struggling Red River Settlement.
BY J.M. BUMSTED

55 BOOKS in REVIEW

60 THE PACKET



ADVENTURERS AT THE CROSSROADS

*At momentous and stormy summer meetings in 1871
the future of the Hudson's Bay Company was charted*

By Arthur J. Ray

In a series of dramatic meetings held in the summer of 1871 a small group of men made a number of decisions that staked the Hudson's Bay Company's future on Canadian economic development, shaped the modern Company, and strongly influenced the subsequent course of Canadian and native history. These decisions were made after heated debate which pitted the directors of the Company against a dissident group of shareholders who organized a stockholders' revolt. The directors believed the Company should diversify its operations and actively participate in a broad range of economic opportunities. The dissidents took a narrower view. They were interested only in the early promotion and sale of property the Company retained after transferring its title to Rupert's Land in 1870. The central issues in the heated debate involved determining what was the best course of action to pursue, taking into account the terms of the sale of Rupert's Land, the conflicting interests of the shareholders and Company officers, and the uncertain economic and political climate of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories in the early 1870s.

The debate was joined on 28 June 1871 when Hudson's Bay Company Governor Sir Stafford Northcote MP convened the annual General Court Meeting of the shareholders and presented them with the long range business plan he and the governing committee had drafted. Preparation of the plan had been a difficult task given the Company's uncertain future. The sale of Rupert's Land had netted only £300,000. In lieu of a larger cash settlement the Company had retained title to the developed lands around its trading establishments and it reserved a one-twentieth share of the lands in the fertile belt of the prairie-parkland region. The implications of the terms of the sale were twofold. They prevented the Company from summarily withdrawing from British North America and they irritated a substantial block of shareholders. These shareholders were in a rebellious mood. Also, the Company's officers were very upset by the sale because they had not been consulted and they were worried that it would have an adverse effect on their financial situation.

To understand the attitudes of the shareholders we need to consider the corporate takeover that had occurred in 1863 and the subsequent actions of the Governor and Committee. In 1863 the International Financial Society bought controlling interest in the Company and promptly increased its nominal capital from £1,393,569 to £2,000,000. This was accomplished by making a subscription offering of £2,000,000 in £20 units. The prospectus issued to promote the share offering claimed that the Hudson's Bay Company would be taking an active part in colonization schemes and would be involved in the building of a transcontinental telegraph. The prospectus explicitly



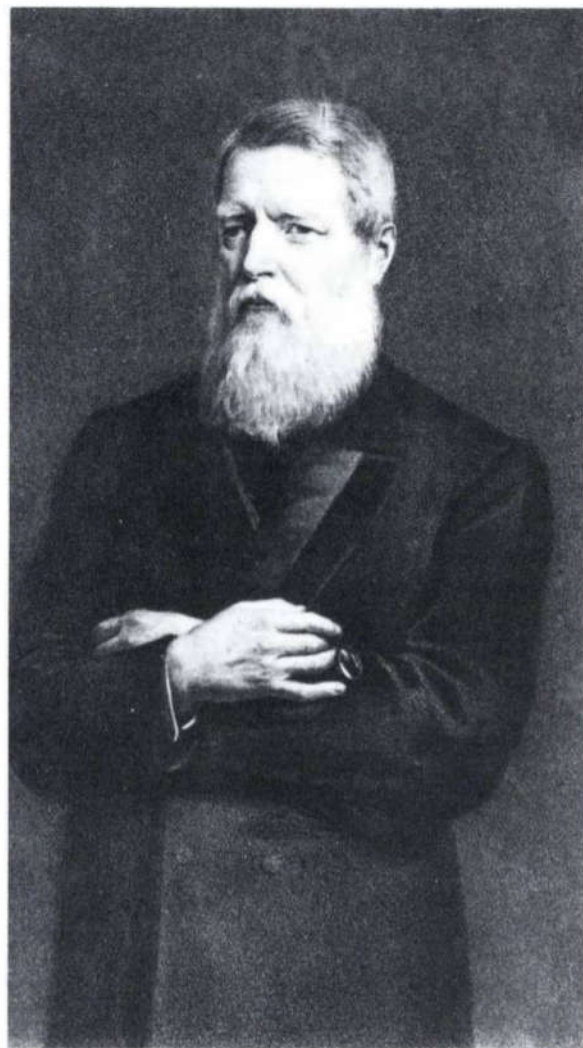
stated that £370,000 of the capital raised by the share offering would be committed immediately to expand the Company's operations into these new spheres of activity. The problem for the new investors was, once the shares had been fully subscribed, the Governor and Committee adopted the view that real estate promotion would have to await the constitution of a civil government. They believed, undoubtedly correctly, that the Company would not be able to recruit settlers as long as it acted as the governing authority. A vocal minority of shareholders took exception to this position and in 1866 they introduced a resolution which demanded that the Governor and Committee take immediate action to promote settlement. The resolution was soundly defeated by a mail ballot, but opposition continued. Two years later a shareholder by the name of Dodd warned the Governor and Committee that they could be sued for not investing £370,000 in colonization schemes. Dodd was speaking for a group of investors who included Edward Watkin (later Sir Edward) who had engineered the 1863 takeover by the International Financial Society.

While they beat back these challenges, the Governor and Committee made an effort to sell the Company's entire estate, first to the British and then to the Canadian government. However, negotiations ran into trouble from the outset because the British government was uninterested in buying the territory and the Canadian government (created in 1867) was unwilling to recognize the Hudson's Bay Company's territorial claim. Also, the Canadians did not have the means to pay the price the Company demanded. In the end the British government forced the two parties to agree to terms that it had drafted. These terms were far less generous than the Governor and Committee had led the shareholders to expect. Based on information provided by the Governor and Committee between 1863 and 1869, the stockholders had anticipated the Hudson's Bay Company would receive between £1,000,000 to £5,000,000 for all of its land holdings. Given this expectation it is understandable why the majority of the shareholders regarded the transfer agreement as a bad deal.

From the shareholders' perspective, another major

problem with the terms of the settlement was that the one-twentieth share of prairie-parkland real estate represented only a potential asset. Two years earlier a shareholder had warned the Governor and Committee not to accept such a consideration in lieu of cash. Before the Company could sell any of this property the Canadian government had to establish its political control over the territory, survey the lands, establish railway links to eastern Canada, and promote immigration. Until these events came to pass, it was clear to the Governor and Committee that the Hudson's Bay Company would have to continue to depend on the fur trade for its primary source of revenue. This fact of business life posed another complex set of problems for the committee. The long term future of the fur trade was unclear. Also, since most of the shareholders had bought Company stock as a real estate venture, the majority of them were not interested in developing the fur trade any further. To the contrary, most of them favoured selling the Company's interests in this enterprise.

Complicating matters further, the current contract arrangements between the officers and the Company created conflicts of interests between these men and the majority of the shareholders. By the terms of the Deed Poll of 1834 the officers collectively shared forty percent of the net profits derived from the fur trade. They were not entitled to share the profits from other Company business ventures. Therefore, it was not in the officers' interest to devote their energies to real estate promotion or to other business schemes. Also, since the officers were not entitled to share in profits generated outside of the fur trade, they did not get a share of the £300,000 the Canadian government paid for the Company's title. Even more irritating to the officers was the fact that, without their prior consent, the Company had given up all claim to any chartered trading privileges and it had agreed to pay Canadian import and export duties. These concessions would cut into fur-trade profit margins and therefore represented a potential drain on the officers' incomes. In light of these developments, the officers' extreme dissatisfaction is understandable. Something had to be done to placate these men. Indeed, the Governor and Committee learned that the officers were in a solid position to seek redress of their grievances. Expert legal opinion, including that of the Attorney General of England, maintained that these men could sue the Company for breach of contract since the provisions of the transfer effectively altered the officers' conditions of appointment without obtaining their prior consent. The Governor and Committee were anxious to avoid any suit and, more importantly, they wanted to obtain the loyal support of the officers. The committee was convinced that this support was essential for the future success of the Company in the various ventures being considered.



Sir Stafford Northcote MP, HBC Governor, 1869-1874.

Recognizing the necessity of obtaining current first hand information about economic and political conditions in British North America, the Governor and Committee asked Cyril Graham, Vice President of the Transatlantic Cable Company, to tour Canada and the Northwest Territories, assess the situation, and recommend courses of action the Hudson's Bay Company should follow. Graham was instructed to pay particular attention to the relations between the Company and its officers, the current and future prospects of the fur trade, and general business conditions. Graham filed two reports, one dated 21 January 1871 and the other dated 15 March 1871. Most of the recommendations contained in these reports, and the accompanying rationale, were incorporated into the blueprint for the Company's future which the Governor and Committee laid before the shareholders at the General Court meeting of 28 June 1871.

There were several important components to the committee's plan. Most significantly, they recommended investing more money in the fur trade to modernize Hudson's Bay Company's operations, particularly its transportation system. They proposed to placate the officers by distributing to them the cash settlement the Company had just received from the United States to satisfy its long standing Oregon claim. Regarding the Company's real estate interests, the committee recommended a moderate course of action. They opposed mounting a vigorous promotion scheme and they cautioned against withholding lands from the market for speculative purposes. Regarding new business ventures, the Governor and Committee proposed developing a general merchandise business to meet the demand for goods and services that would arise once agricultural settlement began. Of importance, these various recommendations were put forward as an integrated business strategy.

The rationale behind this multifaceted proposal was as follows. Graham and the committee were convinced that the prairie-parkland real estate holdings of the Company would be of little value for 10 to 15 years until the proposed transcontinental railway was completed. Furthermore, as of 1871, the Company and the Canadian government had not yet come to terms regarding the procedure for the selection of the Company's one-twentieth share of prairie real estate. Also, land surveying was just beginning. Until the Company had some idea of where its real estate was located, it was folly to attempt to place a value upon it and it could not be offered for sale.

Besides pointing to the need to obtain an interim income from the fur trade, Graham and the Governor and Committee argued that active involvement in the fur trade was necessary to safeguard the Company's real estate interests. In putting forward this opinion the committee reminded the shareholders that hostilities existed between Indians and settlers on the American plains frontier. Comparable conflicts in the Canadian Northwest would delay settlement and prolong the time it would take for the company to capitalize its real estate assets. Graham and the Committee believed that this problem could be avoided by remaining actively involved in the fur trade so that the Company's officers would be able to continue to exert a moderating influence on their native business partners. The Governor and Committee credited the officers with keeping the Siouan refugees from the United States under control in 1866 and with persuading many natives not to actively participate in the Red River uprising of 1869-70. Governor Northcote MP indicated that Prime Minister John A. Macdonald wanted the Company to continue to act as a moderator and peace maker. Apparently quoting from communications he had received from the Prime Minister,

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

FARMING LANDS

FOR SALE

IN MANITOBA

AND

THE NORTH-WEST.

The Hudson's Bay Company own 7,000,000 acres in the Great Fertile Belt, and now offer for sale

500,000 ACRES

already surveyed by the Government of Canada.

Town Lots also for Sale

In Winnipeg, West Lynne, Rat Portage, Portage la Prairie, and Goschen (N.W.T.)

The above will be disposed of at reasonable prices, and on easy terms of payment. Full information in regard to these lands will be given at the offices of the Company in Winnipeg and in Montreal.

C. J. BRYDGES,
Land Commissioner.
45-57

Winnipeg, 1880.

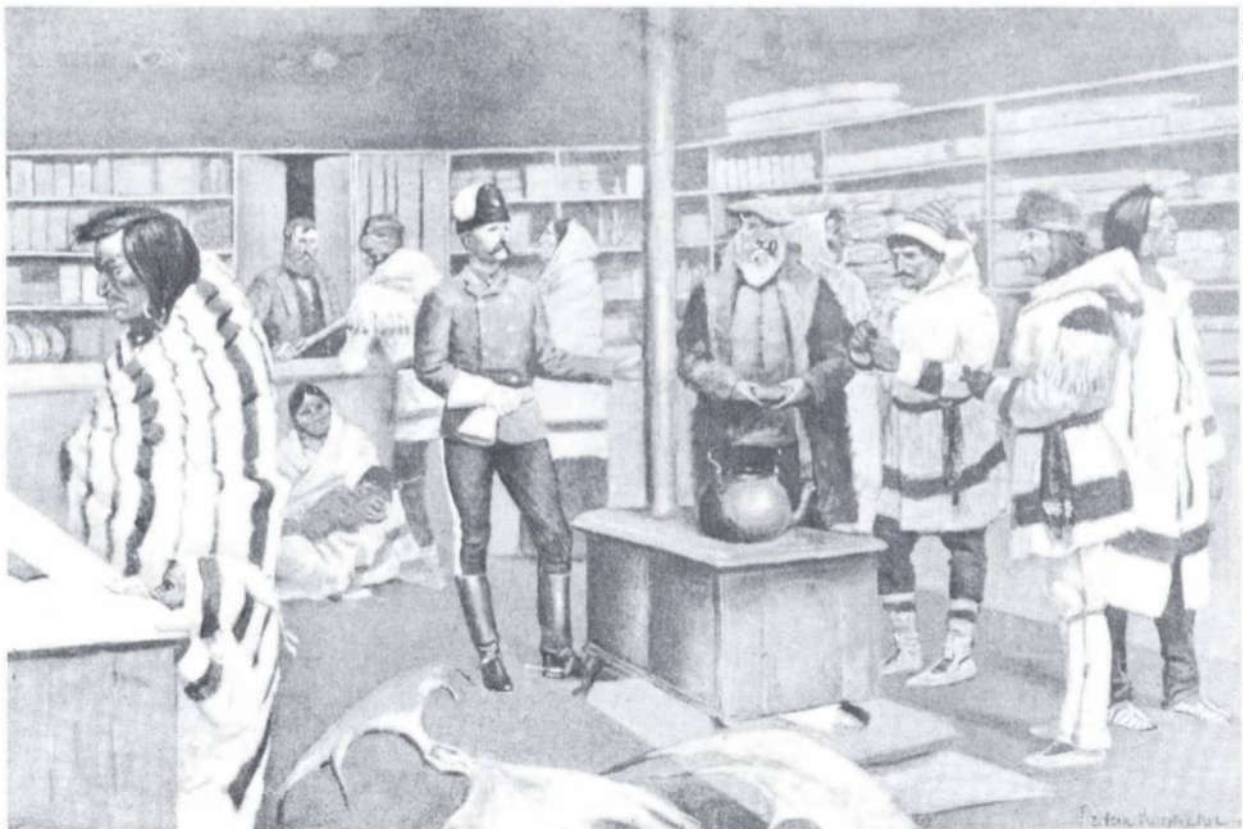
Northcote reported that Macdonald expressed the following viewpoint:

I am very anxious, indeed, that we should be able to deal with the Indians upon satisfactory terms. They are the great difficulty in these newly civilized countries. They are the great difficulty with which the Americans have to contend in their new countries. The Hudson's Bay Company have dealt with the Indians in a thoroughly satisfactory way. The policy of Canada is also to deal with the Indians in a satisfactory manner. It would be of advantage to us, & no doubt it would be of advantage to you, that we should be allowed to make use of your officers & your posts for the purpose of making those payments to the Indians which will have to be made annually by the Government of Canada in order to satisfy their claims & keep them in good humour. The Indians had a title to some of these lands which is now extinguished — upon certain terms which involve annual payments; & it would be of great advantage that we should be able to employ officers who are known to these Indians in order to make these payments & keep the Indians in good humour.

The above considerations aside, after examining the

Company's business records Graham and the committee had come to the conclusion that making additional investments in the fur trade was a wise business decision in its own right. They noted that the volume of returns had not declined over the previous seven years. Rather, it was increasing. Therefore, the problem of declining profit margins in the business was not related to resource depletion, but rather, it was seen as being the consequence of rising operating expenses. These increased expenses were attributed to the rising costs of native labour used in the transport arm of the Company. The Governor and Committee offered the opinion that the introduction of steamboats on the inland rivers and lakes of Manitoba and the Northwest would reduce substantially the Company's manpower requirements. Besides reducing operating costs, the introduction of steam powered transportation potentially offered the added advantage of making the Company less dependent on a native labour force which the committee regarded as being increasingly unreliable. They formed this opinion in light of the work stoppages that had occurred in the Company's transportation operations in 1869 and 1870. Also, they anticipated correctly that new economic developments would offer alternative employment opportunities for

Shoppers at Fort Edmonton, 1866. From a painting by Frederic Remington.



Glenbow Foundation



Ernest P. Mayer/Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery

River transportation at Fort Garry, 1872. From The Dakota Boat by Frank Lynn.

native labourers. This meant native labourers would become harder to obtain and they would demand higher wages. Finally, by using steamboats and by taking advantage of railway service as it became available, the Company would be able to realize an accelerated rate of capital turnover. This meant that over the long term it would be possible to reduce the amount of capital that was required to conduct the fur-trade business.

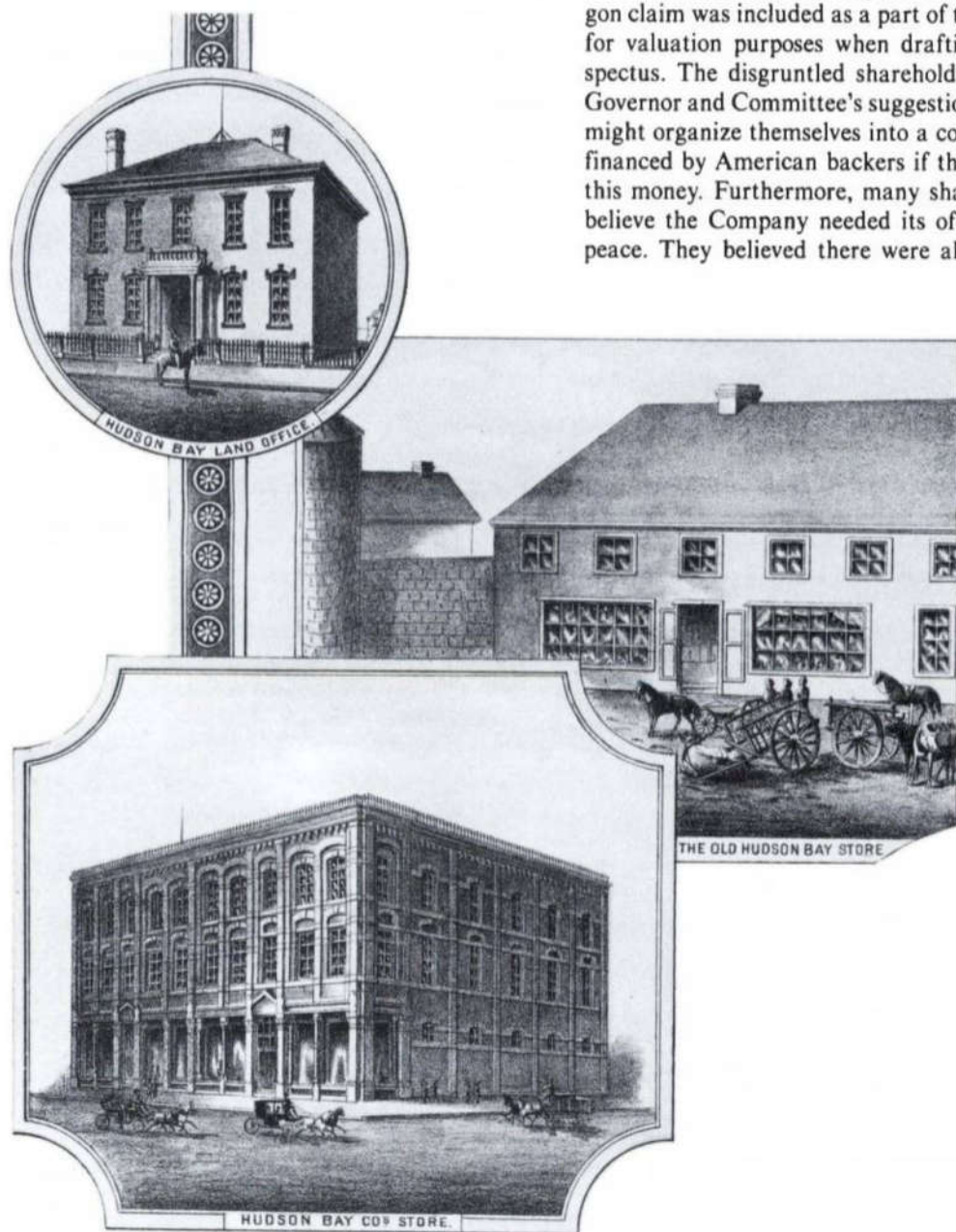
The Governor and Committee were fully aware that the modernization of transportation systems in Canada and the Northwest would bring new problems in addition to benefits. Most notably, better transportation facilities would serve to open the North to competitors. It would no longer be necessary for opponents to shoulder the heavy overhead costs associated with maintaining an extensive transport system. It was the ability of the Hudson's Bay Company to bear this financial burden that had enabled it to hold a virtual monopoly over much of the North between 1821 and 1870. Despite the anticipated loss of this advantage, the Governor and Committee believed that the considerable financial resources of the Company and the experience of its officers would enable the corporation to meet the challenges of a new era of competition. They were confident that the Hudson's Bay Company would continue to carry away the major share of the fur returns of the native people.

Regarding the proposal to develop a general merchandising business, Governor Northcote noted that

many of the Company's posts were located at places which were likely to become centres of settlement. The establishment of salesshops at these posts would serve as an added inducement to draw settlers around them and thereby enhance the value of the Company's real estate holdings at these locations. In this way the Company's gain would be twofold — higher real estate prices and profitable merchandise sales. The Governor and Committee recognized that officers trained in the fur trade probably were not well suited to handle the very different requirements of a general retail trade. They proposed to deal with this problem by hiring three men who were expert in the fields of hardware, dry goods and groceries. These men would develop this new branch of business.

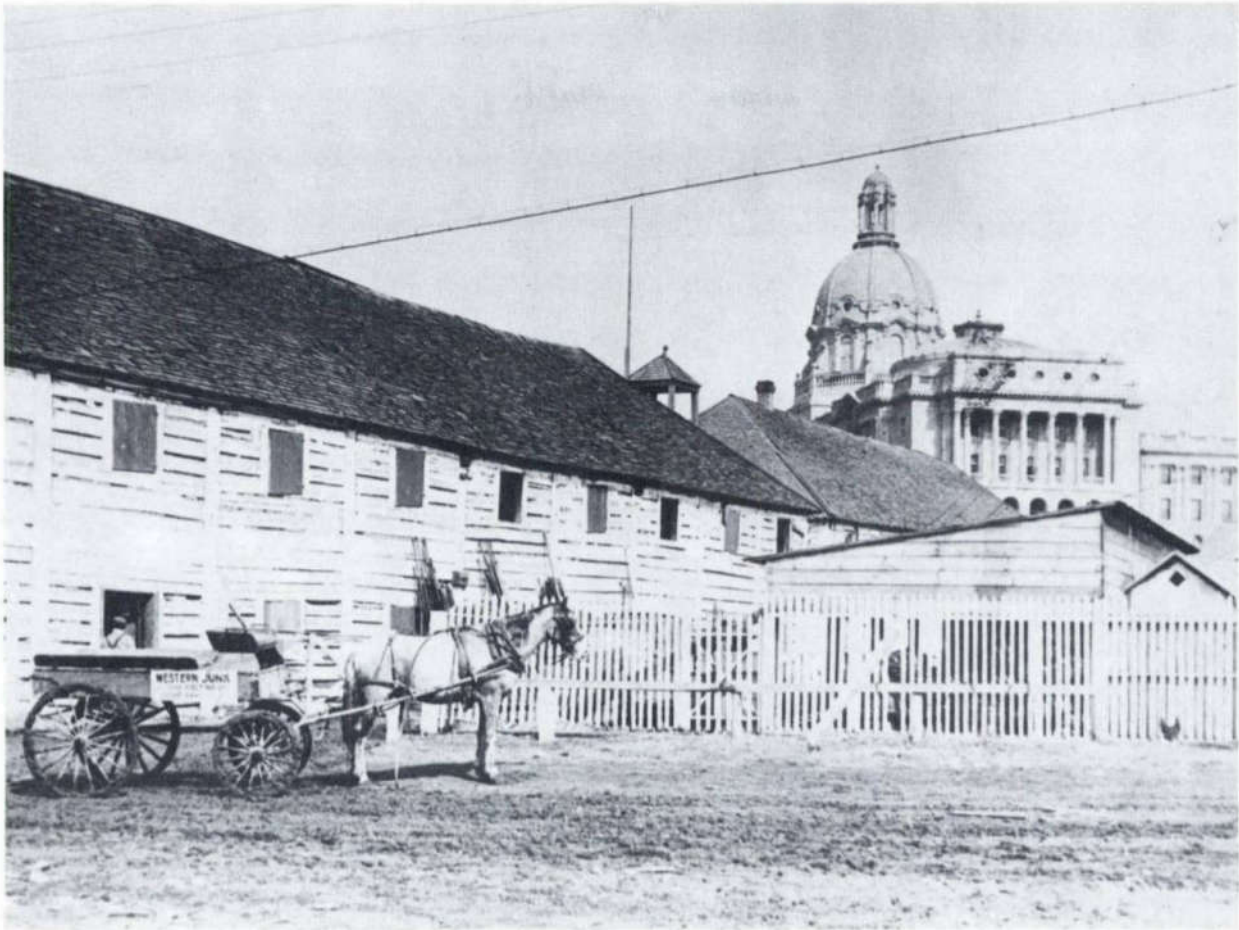
As noted, the Governor and Committee's plan received a hostile reception from the majority of the shareholders who were present at the 28 June meeting. In advance of the meeting a report had been circulated by a dissident group of shareholders who were highly critical of the manner in which the Governor and Committee had been managing the Company. As soon as Governor Northcote's motion to receive the committee's report and accept their recommendations was seconded, amendments were moved from the floor that were essentially nonconfidence motions. They served to spark a heated debate. Strong objection was made to the recommendation to invest more money in the fur trade to modernize the transportation operations of the Company. One shareholder caustically remarked:

Sites of HBC commercial activity, Winnipeg, late nineteenth century. The old store was located in the fort. The early department store and the land office stood on Main Street near the old fort site.



Gentlemen, this company has not been very celebrated for doing things in a hurry. It is really very much like Rip Van Winkle waking up in the year 1871 and finding out that steam-engines and steam boats will be of advantage to the trade.

The suggestion that the Oregon settlement money should be paid to the officers in order to retain their loyalty provoked an especially hostile reaction. The majority of the assembled shareholders believed that they were entitled to receive the money. After all, they were convinced that they had been short changed by the terms of the sale of Rupert's Land. Also, the Oregon claim was included as a part of the property assets for valuation purposes when drafting the 1863 prospectus. The disgruntled shareholders scoffed at the Governor and Committee's suggestion that the officers might organize themselves into a competing company financed by American backers if they did not receive this money. Furthermore, many shareholders did not believe the Company needed its officers to keep the peace. They believed there were alternative ways of



Parliament buildings rise behind old Fort Edmonton in this early twentieth century photograph.

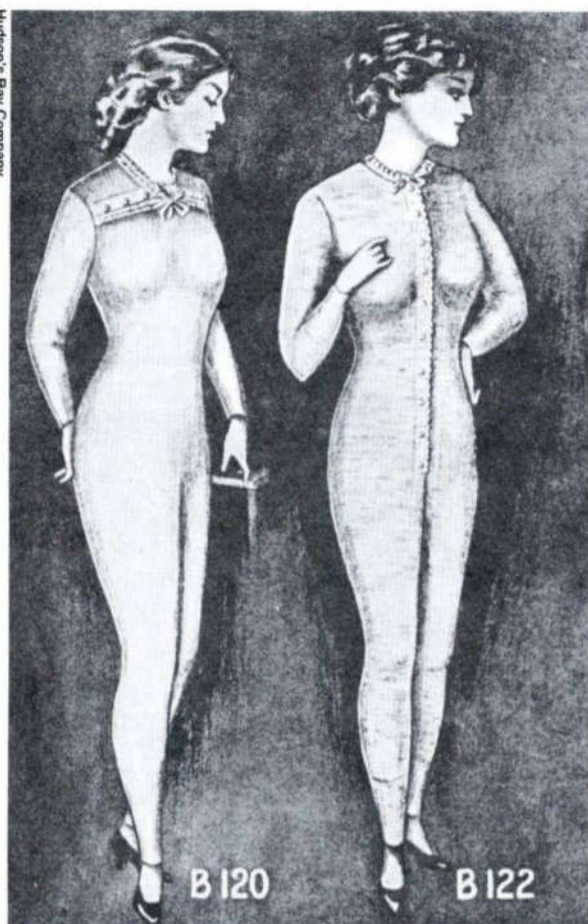
dealing with any potential hostile actions by Indians. This issue had arisen five years earlier with respect to the menace that Siouan refugees posed for the Red River settlement. At that time, Dodd, who was mentioned earlier, discounted this threat to settlement. Furthermore, he remarked: "... even if it were so, surely it was not one which might not, in this age of volunteers and militia-men, be easily disposed of." Dodd was not alone in this view.

The recommendation that the Company develop a general retail trade also raised the hackles of the dissidents. Another shareholder, a Mr. Skinner, challenged this aspect of the plan saying:

There is a legal question involved ... We are not general traders. I have never seen any charter which authorizes us to become general factors or vendors ... Our business was the fur trade, and the grant was made to us with a view simply of enabling us to carry that on. In your present recommendations you are going upon a totally different basis ... Well now, sir, I beg, without intending any offence, to express my belief that that is a wild project, and it

is impossible for the shareholders to come to any decision upon the report without having proper and sufficient information before them as to what are their rights with regard to the fur trade, and how it is proposed to carry it on.

Heated debate dragged on and there were repeated calls for a vote on the nonconfidence motion that was on the floor. At 4:00 PM a vote was finally cast. The Governor and Committee lost by a show of hands. However, the matter did not end there. The directors called for a paper ballot to be concluded at 6:00 PM with the results to be announced at a special meeting the following morning. When the stockholders reconvened, Governor Northcote announced that the nonconfidence motion had been defeated by a narrow margin. The dissenters cried foul. They pointed out that a number of shareholders had cast paper ballots who had not been present at the meeting and this was a violation of Company bylaws which stipulated that only the shareholders present at a meeting were allowed to vote. Since Governor Northcote was not in the chair between 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM when paper ballots



HBC retail goods, circa 1911.

were cast, the meeting was officially concluded and therefore those votes were invalid.

Although the Governor and Committee did not accept this interpretation, they decided that the matter was too important to be decided under a cloud of suspicion. To satisfy everyone they called another meeting for 12 July 1871 and announced that a paper ballot would follow the meeting. Acting on the advice of lawyers, they planned to have a committee member sit in the chair until all ballots were cast. In this way they would not be subject to the charge that ballots were cast illegally.

Once the meeting of 12 July was called to order, Governor Northcote began by restating the committee's position. After he concluded his remarks, the attack from the floor began again and the debate droned on. To the distress of many of the shareholders who had assembled simply to vote, the points and counterpoints of the previous meeting were put forward once more. The verbatim transcript of the meeting indicates that speakers were frequently interrupted by hecklers who shouted "we've heard it all before" and "time, time!" Once Governor Northcote finally asked

the shareholders to vote on the Committee's report and recommendation, the Governor and Committee carried the day and their blueprint for the Company was approved.

The subsequent course of Canadian and Hudson's Bay Company history demonstrates that Graham and the Governor and Committee had great foresight and they made the right decisions in 1870 and 1871. The fur trade continued to prosper and provided the Company with its largest single net income until 1900. Starting with salesshops at its trading posts the Company built a merchandise sales division. As predicted, significant sales of Hudson's Bay Company land outside of the immediate area of Winnipeg did not begin until after the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in 1885. In the end, by gradually disposing of lands over an extended period the Company realized much more than the £1,000,000 to £5,000,000 shareholders had expected in 1870. As proposed, the Company did frequently assist the government in its dealings with the native peoples after 1871 and it often directly benefitted by doing so.

In conclusion, it is clear that the future of the Hudson's Bay Company hung in the balance during the summer of 1871. Investors interested only in short-term gains in real estate were pitted against the Governor and Committee and their backers who had a broader vision. Taking full advantage of their position within the Company and their connections in the London business community, the Governor and Committee won the day by a narrow margin and were able to implement their plan. It is clear from hindsight that their blueprint was very sound and it laid the groundwork for the modern corporation. Today the Hudson's Bay Company is still a giant in the fur industry; it is still an important factor in the lives of many native people in Canada; it is a dominant force in the Canadian retail industry; it is still a major real estate developer through its various subsidiary companies; and it is actively involved in resource development. ♦

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author would like to thank the Hudson's Bay Company for permission to consult and quote from its archives. He would like to thank Mrs. Shirlee A. Smith, Keeper, HBC Archives, for commenting on earlier drafts of this article. The financial assistance which the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada provided to defray research expenses is greatly appreciated.

Arthur J. Ray is Professor of History at the University of British Columbia and an authority on Hudson's Bay Company history.

ON STAGE NOW!

★ THE CHASTELY VOLUPTUOUS WEBLINGS ★

By **Betty C. Keller**

* FEATURING *

The Delightful Lucy

*

The Enchanting Peggy

*

The Engaging Josephine

*

* The Pert Rosalind *

CANADA'S SWEETHEARTS
WITH

**PAULINE JOHNSON
ELLEN TERRY**

● AND A CAST OF THOUSANDS ●

SCENES FROM SHAKESPEARE

☆ PATRIOTIC INTERLUDES ☆

The Balcony	\$1.00
Dress Circle	.50
Gallery	.25

★ GOD SAVE THE QUEER ★

In 1890, when the Webbing Sisters of London, England, had become somewhat long in the tooth to be passed off as "child" recitalists, their mother packed two of them — nineteen-year-old Peggy and twenty-five-year-old Josephine — off to visit an uncle in Brantford, Ontario, presumably in the hope they would find husbands. One of them succeeded, but the other found a new audience for the family act, and as a result, the Weblings became part of Canada's theatrical history.

As stage mothers go, Maria Webbing was really rather refined and discreet, but she was also very determined. After all, what is a mother to do if she has six pretty, dramatically inclined daughters, and if she has no money and few connections, and if the world she inhabits decrees that respectable young women must become nurses, teachers or stenographers, and none of her daughters has a bent for these things? There is nothing to do, of course, but put them on the stage.

In 1880, when her daughters had ranged in age from two to seventeen years, Maria Webbing organized their first professional recital in London's Steinway Hall, though she only managed to get three of them on the stage on that occasion. Ethel, the eldest, escaped a stage career by winning a scholarship to the Slade School of Art; Ruth, the twelve-year-old, simply refused to perform in public; and Lucy, the baby, who would eventually prove to be the most talented, was still babbling baby talk. But Josephine at sixteen, Rosalind at thirteen and Peggy at nine rose happily to their mother's challenge. They were petite girls — none of them ever topped five feet — so that they passed as children even after they were in their late teens. They were pretty, perfectly well-mannered, precocious little girls in velvet frocks and shoes dyed to match (one of their mother's innovations), or in doublet and hose for scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, or in powdered wigs and satin gowns to play Sir Peter and Lady Teazle in *School for Scandal*.

The little Weblings were a smashing success — partly because child recitalists were such a novelty at that time (there were hundreds of them on stage a dozen years later) and partly because they were genuinely talented. After their Steinway Hall appearance, they were booked regularly for fashionable soirees and parties and variety concerts all over London, and after baby Lucy joined the act — she worked as a photographer's model until she was seven — they became the pets of the literary and artistic set. When they included selections from *Alice in Wonderland* in their repertoire, Lewis Carroll came to call on them and praise their work. John Ruskin, having heard Josephine recite Shelley's "Clouds", changed his mind about poetry recitalists and became the Weblings' champion and friend, often inviting them to stay at his home in the Lake District. Oscar Wilde described



The Webling sisters in 1885. Clockwise: Ruth who married young and escaped the stage, Peggy, Baby Lucy, Josephine and Rosalind.

Peggy Webling as "too precious" after he heard her recite. They performed at a private reception for the Prince and Princess of Wales (later Edward VII and Queen Alexandra), and at the studio of Frank Myles for Lily Langtry's entertainment. The actress Ellen Terry came to seem them recite, then called on them for tea and invited them to use her private box at Henry Irving's Lyceum Theatre.

The strangest part about their success was the fact that they had no dramatic training, not even the customary elocution lessons. They had been educated at home, except for singing lessons from a maiden lady who doubled as a milliner, and a year of French instruction for the three older girls in a Catholic convent in Belgium. They had the advantage of a genteel middle class upbringing. They lived over the little shop where their father repaired antique silver in a tidy lane adjoining Kensington Gardens, and they were raised on the poetry of Shelley, Browning and Byron. They attended plays at Drury Lane and art shows at Burlington House. They were cultivated, if not educated.

The act broke up when Lucy was nine. She had been invited to star in the first road company of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and Peggy was hired to play the role of Dick, the American bootblack. Their mother went with

them as chaperone. When the run was over eighteen months later Maria Webling sank the family's fortunes into a new play by *Fauntleroy's* author, a work which would once again star little Lucy, but the play failed and the family was left with a shortage of cash. Maria now made up her mind to marry her daughters off. Ethel was making a modest living as an illustrator, Ruth had married and Rosalind was engaged, so Maria simply packed bags for Josephine and Peggy and shipped them off to Canada. The two girls spent a year in Brantford with their uncle and his family. They became part of Pauline Johnson's circle of friends — this was before she went on the recital stage herself — and Pauline wrote a poem in Peggy's honour. Josephine was probably less popular with Pauline because she became engaged to marry one of Pauline's own admirers, Alfred Watt.

But as far as the family's fortunes were concerned, the most important outcome of the year in Brantford was the Weblings' successful return to the recital platform, usually at amateur events, but sometimes for benefits. Among the predominantly British population, the Webling brand of "literary treat" was enthusiastically received. With this encouragement, in the fall of 1891, Maria Webling brought Lucy and Rosalind, whose engagement had been broken, to New York

Lucy as Little Lord Fauntleroy.



where Peggy and Josephine joined them. They spent the winter trying to break into the American recital circuit. The Americans were not enthusiastic about the Weblings' very British performance, so in the summer of 1892 Maria took her daughters back to Brantford and married Josephine off to Alfred Watt. Then, with Lucy as the star, the Weblings gave a series of successful recitals that earned them enough money for their passage back to England.

This might have been the end of their Canadian adventures, but Pauline Johnson went to England on her first recital tour in 1894 and she urged the Weblings to give Canada another try. She even recommended an agent for them in Toronto, a man named Fred Shipman who would later mismanage her own career. Within days of their arrival in Toronto in mid-April, 1895, Shipman had the girls on the road doing one-night stands, just a day or two behind his own progress across the country booking halls for them to entertain in. Maria was left behind this time in a Toronto hotel. On the road, Rosalind, who was now twenty-six, acted as company manager, Peggy was stage manager, and both of them acted as chaperones for Lucy, who at seventeen was the star of the show.

Although the opera house and town hall managers who booked their act sight unseen sometimes confused the Weblings with variety or music hall troupes, there was little of the music hall in the shows they staged. They made some concessions to their backwoods audiences, but they still built their shows around scenes from Shakespeare or bits from Restoration and eighteenth century comedies, determined to "keep up the standard of their work." Sometimes they played little "comediottas" that Peggy wrote for them, and on every bill Lucy sang one or two songs and she and Rosalind danced. Peggy's forte was comic verse.

A standard part of nearly every show was a little item they called "*Britannia*" in which Peggy, as the personification of Great Britain in a draped flag, plumed helmet and shield, posed at centre stage while her sisters, in Scottish and Irish costumes performed traditional dances. This was a great hit in the little towns of Ontario where most of the audience was British, and the *Rat Portage* newspaper's reporter was so impressed that he ended his review with: "The Webling Sisters, in the patriotic sketch called '*Britannia*,' dropped a never-to-be-forgotten stone into the splashing heart-wells of patriotism".

Peggy was not so enthusiastic about *Britannia* — in winter she found the Union Jack made a very drafty costume, and in summer she complained that her helmet — or "pot" as the sisters referred to it — was hot enough to "melt my brains."

The Weblings' mixed bag of culture and patriotism was successful in the remote farming communities and mining camps, because the girls were so obviously sin-



Rosalind, Peggy and Lucy in their *Britannia* tableau.

cere about their show and because they didn't play down to their audiences. In one town, they were paid the supreme compliment of hearing their show described as "suitable for the cultured and the illiterate."

The sisters formed a self-sufficient company except for one thing — none of them could play a musical instrument to accompany their songs and dances. They had to rely on "local talent" for their first six-week tour of Ontario and the effect on the program was disastrous. "Local talent," wrote Peggy, "was chiefly represented by young ladies, all self-confident in the morning and wretchedly nervous at night. They invariably rattled the minuet and played the Irish jig like a dirge. Local talent occasionally burst into tears before the audience and always forgot everything it had been told."

They hired several young men in turn to travel with them as accompanist but none of them could stand the pace of one-night-stand touring. Finally, they found a young woman who thrived on this kind of adventure and who could also play any tune and make it recognizable even on the derelict pianos they found in the opera houses of the West.



Rosalind in her Irish jig costume photographed in Vancouver by the man she married, George Edwards.

For variety and stock companies, the winter touring season in Canada began about 1 September in those days (it started about two weeks earlier across the border), and concluded around mid-May. By June, the summer "snaps" had begun, short tours through farming areas that were too inaccessible for winter bookings. The Weblings had arrived in Canada in time for the wind-down of the winter season, so Shipman broke them in in southern Ontario, then, in early June, he sent them West for their first "snap". Four pretty young women — the Weblings and their accompanist — with a mound of luggage full of elaborate costumes, drapes and banners to camouflage the makeshift stages they would have to play on, and a miscellany of stage properties, headed West where men were men and women were often not ladies. It would not have been too surprising if the Weblings' intentions had been mistaken, since quite a number of the females who travelled that country as variety entertainers had a different brand of variety on their minds, but the Weblings' status never seems to have been questioned. Whenever they did have problems, it seems to have been other women who caused them, because the Weblings looked like a threat to the sanctity of Home and Church. One mid-

dle-aged woman whose husband was the caretaker of the local opera house watched from the wings while the Weblings performed, then confessed that she should not have been watching since she had just come from a revivalist meeting. Then, looking at Lucy, she said, "Ain't she real sweet? Do you think it will do me any harm to watch her?"

Their difficulties with men came from too many proposals rather than propositions. And with the proposals came gifts — flowers, magazines and novels, a sack of apples, gold nuggets, a twenty-pound watermelon, cookies, photographs, beaded moccasins and Indian head-dresses. One of Lucy's admirers tried to present her with a bear cub, and when she wouldn't accept it, insisted that she keep a bullet from the gun that had killed the cub's mother. Some of the young men followed the girls from town to town until they couldn't afford to follow any longer.

Luckily, in spite of their size, all the Weblings were strong, healthy girls and stood up well to the gruelling pace. In their first three week snap in southern Man-

Lucy and her mother. Opposite page: Rosalind and Lucy photographed on Lucy's wedding day, Vancouver 1909.





itoba, they gave seventeen performances in Winnipeg, Morris, Emerson, Gretna, Morden, Manitou, Pilot Mound, Boissevain, Deloraine, Melita, Souris, Brandon, and Portage la Prairie. These one-night stands meant that at least part of every day had to be spent travelling either by train or horse and buggy, and that every night would be spent in a different hotel. It meant adapting their show to another church hall or opera house or school house every evening, and squeezing into another cramped, airless little dressing room before the show.

Their first audiences were small, but the newspaper reviews were favourable: They were called "brightly novel" and "entirely original and unique"; their dances were described as "graceful" and "refined", although one reporter insisted there were only two words to describe them: "chaste voluptuousness." In one small settlement, they were commended for having "no vulgarness whatever" in their show.

Most of their performances were sponsored by a local organization — the Freemasons, the Oddfellows, Knights of Pythias, the fire brigade, the bicycle club, the Ladies Baptist League or the Willing Workers of the Episcopal Church. These groups usually provided a chairman for the evening who sat at the back of the platform dressed in his Sunday best, popping up from time to time to make an announcement. One of them insisted on rising after each of the Weblings' numbers to say, "Well, I'm bound to say we're getting on very nicely so far!"

The Weblings "got along very nicely" for three years in Canada, becoming well-known from one end of the country to the other. They played B.C.'s Kootenays at the height of the gold boom, and they spent one spring wandering from town to town in Nova Scotia with "a feeling of rapture and rest." In northern Ontario they played in halls so small that the first row of the audience rested on their elbows on the apron of the stage, and in Alberta one audience sat on planks resting on barrels. They learned to conquer the gangs of boys that sat at the back of the halls making catcalls during their performances by inviting their ringleader to pull the curtain and serve as stagehand. Sometimes after their recitals the local people held a dance and the little Weblings were swept off their feet by tall cowboys and miners. They travelled by stage coach between the little settlements most of the time, though in the Arrow Lakes district they took passage on the river steamers *Nakusp* and *Trail*. On one lovely summer day they rode the last eighteen miles into Field, B.C. on the pilot beam of the locomotive with their legs dangling over the cowcatcher.

In early June 1898 the Weblings decided to return to London and take another flyer at their old circuits, but recitalists had become passé in the intervening years. Lucy found a place as a dancer with George



Rosalind and Lucy in dance costumes.

Alexander's company at the St. James Theatre; Peggy found a job writing for an arts journal, and in time graduated from that to become a popular novelist. Rosalind returned to Vancouver to marry one of her ardent admirers, George Edwards, a prominent portrait photographer. (Her daughter still lives in that city.)

In 1909, Lucy Webling returned to Canada to marry Walter McRaye, Pauline Johnson's stage partner, and after Pauline retired Lucy toured the country with McRaye, acting in plays written by her sister Peggy. The team broke up in 1914 and ten years later Lucy returned to England with her son to live out her life in a little flat adjoining the ones occupied by her sisters Peggy and Ethel. ♦

Betty C. Keller, who lives in British Columbia, has published biographies of Pauline Johnson and Ernest Thompson Seton.

ARMOURER JOHN MILES AT MOOSE FORT

By Michael D. Woods

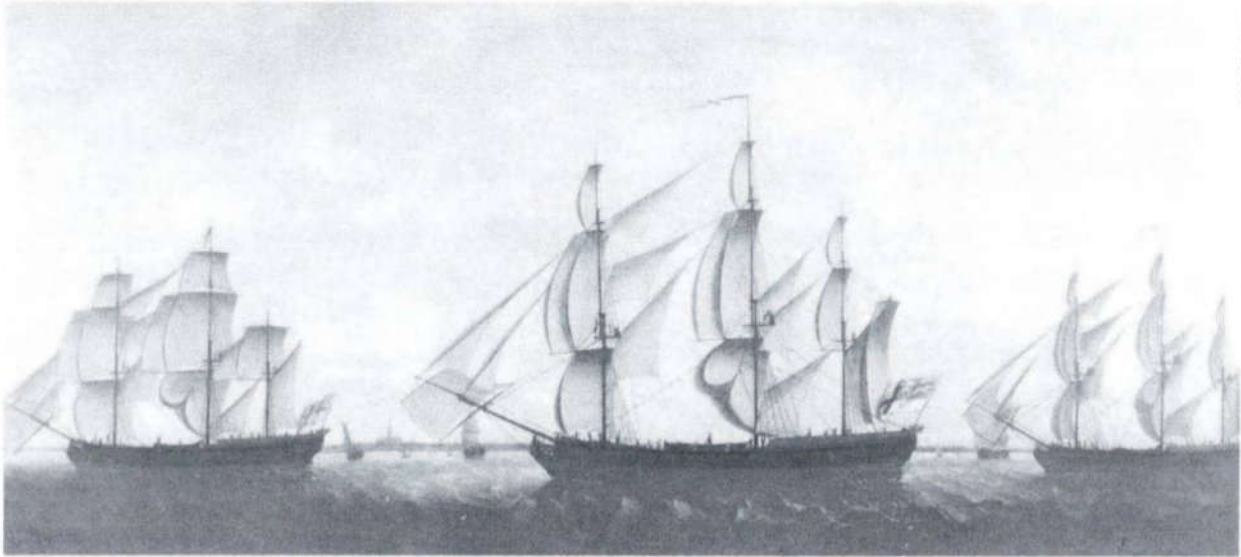
The sun had been up for three hours. Now, as the tide turned, sailors strained at the hausers and anchors were slowly pulled free from the mud. Moving slowly and cautiously past the East Indiamen and tea clippers that clogged the channels and wharfs, the ships paused and, as was the custom, fired a nine-gun salute. Thames-side, London, 2 June 1769, and the annual Hudson's Bay Company supply convoy, the *King George*, the *Prince Rupert* and the *Seahorse II*, prepared to sail three thousand miles to the wilderness of Rupert's Land in Canada. On board the *Seahorse*, a narrow "pink" of about two hundred tons, was sixteen year old John Miles.

Miles had been born almost within sight of these same docks, in the Minories, Stepney, on 1 August 1752. That was the year England adopted the Gregorian Calendar; his baptismal day, 2 September, was followed by 14 September and was marred by disturbances as the alehouse brigades rioted to protest the "loss" of eleven days. His early years were harsh, for Stepney was a place of slums, brothels and alehouses, its narrow streets crowded with poor and unskilled labourers. At age nine he was sent "hungry and naked" to an uncle in Birmingham who "took him in, fed and clothed him and set him apprentice". At the completion of this apprenticeship Miles had signed a five year contract as Armourer and was assigned to the Company's trading post at Moose River, at the "bottom of the Bay". His contract called for a salary of £20 for the first three years and £25 for each of the final two years.

Among Miles's new companions on the *Seahorse* was John Thomas, who has signed on as a writer (clerk) at £10 per year. Servant Thomas would stay on at the Bay long after Miles; in 1774 he would become second-in-command at Moose Fort and, in 1782, its chief factor.

With a brief stop in the Orkney Islands to pick up additional Company servants, the voyage to the Bay took about three months. During that time Miles and the other passengers did "watch and ward" duty and trained in the exercise of small arms. They also shared the sailors' lot — the cramped space, the poor food — and weathered their share of Atlantic squalls. In late July, off the fog-laden coast of Labrador, the ships met the whalers *Duke* and *Mary*, out of Boston, and were warned of numerous icebergs in the area. On 1 August the convoy reached the Hudson Straits; it was Miles's seventeenth birthday. Even at this midsummer date the passage was a jumble of pack ice, ice floes and open water. In places the thickness of the ice required the crew of the *Seahorse* to use grappling irons to break open a path.

At Cape Diggs the *Seahorse* paused briefly when "esquimaux" came alongside to barter. Instructed to "encourage esquimaux to trade whole skins of any sort", the ship captains were nevertheless forbidden to fire the ship's cannon to signal the natives. Always fearful of attack by the French or other rovers, as the loss of even a single supply ship would mean great hardship at the posts, the convoy ships were to keep as low a profile as possible. Yet the captain and crew wanted



Three Hudson's Bay Company ships on the Thames, from an oil painting by Francis Holman, 1771. The ships are King George, Prince Rupert and Seahorse.

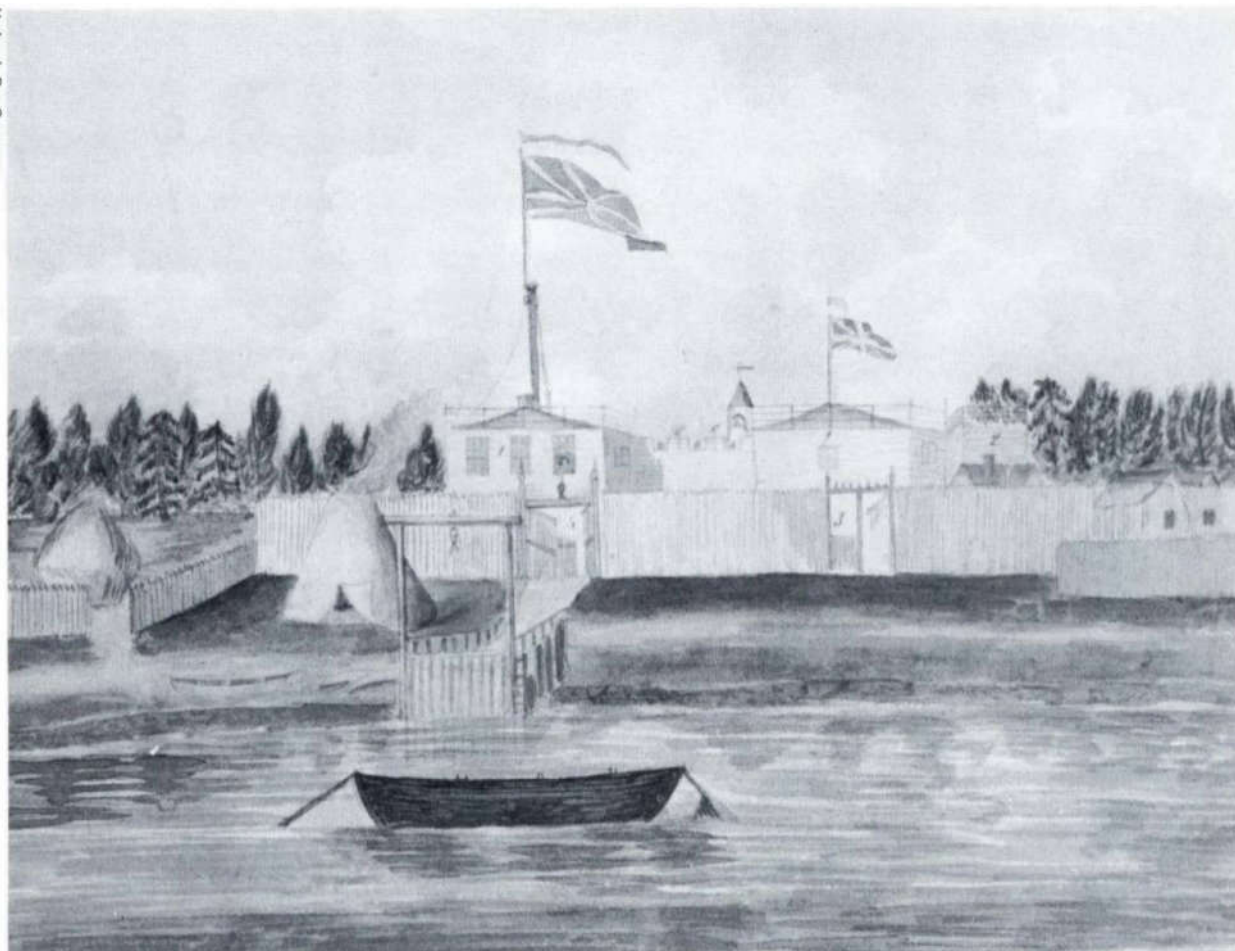
this trade. It gave them a chance for some private barter — for ivory carvings and seal and walrus oil for the ship lamps and the cannon's roar was the only effective way of sending word of the ship's arrival across the long gravel covered beaches. Captain Horner on the *Seahorse* solved the problem quite handily. The log of that ship records that on 4 August 1769 the fog was so thick that "guns were fired by the ships to keep track of each other". Horner could claim it was only coincidental that at 2 o'clock that afternoon natives came alongside.

The barter completed, the convoy separated; the *King George* and *Prince Rupert* continued west across the bay to bring their supplies to the northern posts at York and Prince of Wales, while *Seahorse* headed south into James Bay. Near Akimiski Island, just before reaching Albany Fort, there occurred a final bit of adventure when a polar bear was sighted atop a large ice floe. Captain Horner approached in the jolly boat and shot the beast, but the animal sank before its fur could be salvaged. *Seahorse* stayed at Albany Post only a few days, exchanging supplies for furs and a few of its passengers. One of these latter was young Mr. Thomas who, apparently relieved to have solid earth under his feet once again, proceeded overland to Moose Fort, ninety miles to the southeast. Miles and the other servants were soon also on their way, reaching the Moose River on 2 September 1769. At its mouth the Moose River is tidal, with many treacherous shoals and sandy isles. On one of these, about twelve miles out from the shore, stood Moose Fort. Anchoring out in the "Roads", beyond these barriers, the *Seahorse* transferred its cargo to the Eastmain sloop. Oars

brought the weary travellers the final few miles to the post.

Built in 1673 as a wintering house, Moose Fort was captured by the French in 1686 and later, in 1735, accidentally burned. By the time of Miles's arrival however, it was really more a depot for shipping the beaver pelts back to England than a fort. Indeed, the term "fort" was even then being replaced with "factory". It consisted of a group of small buildings or flankers clustered around the main Factory, all of these enclosed within a wooden palisade. The latter, almost twenty feet in height, was built and maintained more to keep out the wind than to deter marauding savages. Hearne's map of 1774 shows the post to have been square shaped with a courtyard in the centre. Opening out toward the river was a large gate, half a foot thick, studded with nails and reinforced with bars of iron. From this gate a trail led down a steep slope to the water's edge where, across a few hundred feet of channel, lay Flat Island and, beyond that, the eastern shore of Moose River. In the meadow behind the post — the "plantation" — could be found a few Indian dwellings, their number varying with the season and the severity of the weather.

Besides Chief Factor Christopher Goston and his second-in-command, Eusebius Kitchin, Miles's fellow servants — twenty-three in all — included carpenters, clerks, a tailor, sloopmaster sailors, caulkers and labourers. The sailors crewed the two shallow-draft sloops, the *Moose* and the *Bonspirit*, used to transport men and supplies from post to post. When Miles arrived, he replaced William Cooley who had served as armourer since 1766.



Moose Factory as painted by William Richards, a Company servant in the James Bay area 1804-1811.

Miles, as armourer, was responsible for cleaning and mending, as necessary, all the guns already at the post and those brought in by the Indians. Almost 350 trade muskets had been unloaded from the *Seahorse*. Some of these were of poor quality. Too expensive and time consuming to return such wares back to England, the repairs had to be made at the Factory forge. The Correspondence Book at Moose records one such incident:

Our armourer [Miles] was obligated to take a piece out of one of your Indians new guns and braze it again. Joyner is the makers name. I am of the opinion most of his guns is [sic] very indifferent.

The post's Journal records often that Miles, as the settlement's blacksmith, was "at the forge". There he was engaged in making tools for his own use, forging bolts and hooks or hunting darts for the Indians or, as in 1773, making the plates used to cover the bars across the fort's gate. On other occasions he welded the men's saws and repaired the post bell. And of course he made the nails and spikes that held everything together.

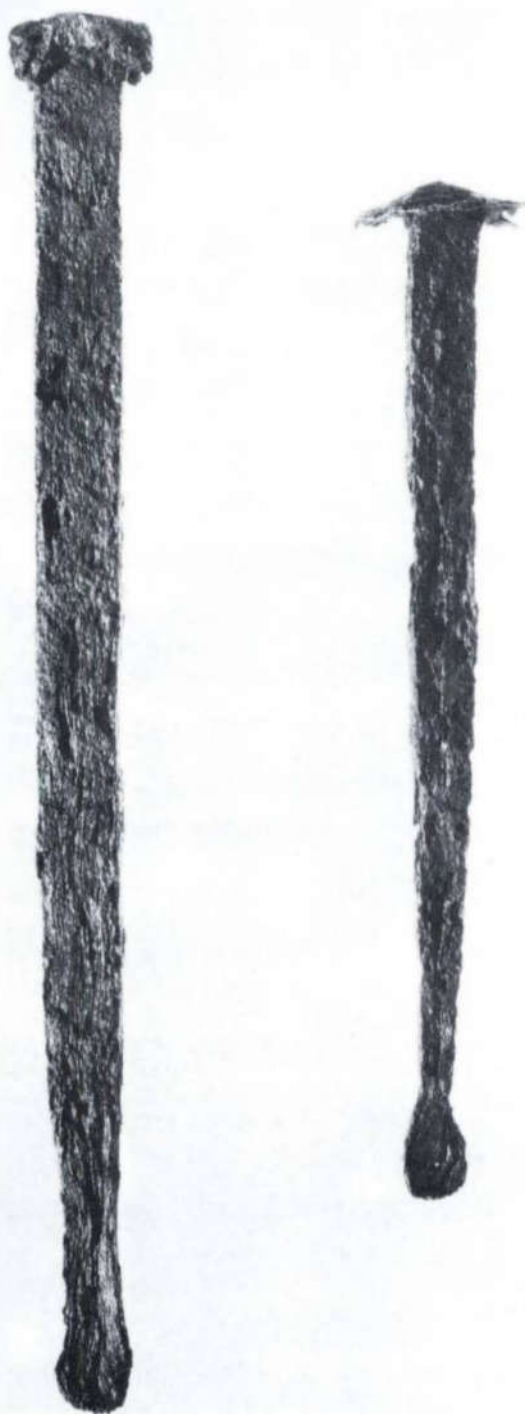
Today, along the shore of Flat Island can be found such nails and spikes, their heads still showing the striker's hammer. For much of his five years at Moose Fort, Miles's striker or assistant was Trolio, an Eskimo living with the Cree.

In addition to this type of work, the armourer had also to be a skilled woodworker, able to fashion or replace gun stocks and pistol grips, even, as when Chief Factor Garbutt died in 1772, to make a "board" for the grave.

Armourer Miles apparently had trouble in tempering some of the ironwork and his skill was sometimes criticized. In 1770, Chief Factor Garbutt requested his counterpart at Albany Post to send to Moose Fort some "falling hatches, as our armourer cannot make any". Later, in 1772, it was recorded:

Hatches and [ice] chisels made by the smith, the temper of them is not so good as the English manufacture — they only deceive the natives.

The following year Chief Factor Kitchin sent Miles



Miles created spikes similar to this one at his forge at Moose Fort.
 Opposite page: Extract from Moose Fort account book, 1773-1774.
 Note references to John Miles under "Mens' Debts".

to Albany Fort to be "introduced in the nature of tempering of [sic] mainspring to guns".

Miles's tenure at Moose Fort was a critical time for the Company. The Nor'westers or "pedlars", as the fur traders moving up from Montreal were called, had reached as close as the Abitibi River, only 250 miles to the southwest. To combat this competition the Company tried to establish inland posts. Much of the exploration for this task was organized by Joseph Stevens and John Thomas, Miles's companion on the *Seahorse*. Throughout most of July 1773 Armourer Miles toiled, making the ironwork on the long boat that Stevens used in his exploration of the Nottaway (Nodoway) River.

Life at the post was difficult at best. Though located at the same latitude as London, Moose Fort had winter temperatures that usually hovered at the -25°C level and often plummeted to -50°C . Double doors, double windows and a fireplace kept roaring could not always keep water basins in the living quarters from crusting over with ice; sometimes, the ink in the inkwells froze. Guns carried into a room from the outside would turn white with hoar frost; flesh touching such metal would adhere to it and be set free often with the cost of torn skin. Even summer sometimes conspired against the men. Frequently it was marked by violent lightning storms, the hot and sultry air enjoyed only by the myriad mosquitoes swarming over the trails.

Worse than the cold and darkness was the isolation and sameness of the men's lives. Each day was like the other. A man's companions were as cell mates with their often retold stories unwillingly memorized. A chance remark or event, as who sat where at the mess or the amount of butter set on the table, could lead to disagreements, grudges, or fights. Factions developed, each group certain that the other was plotting in some way to harm them or their career. Frits Pannekoek notes that both Joseph Isbister, the Factor at Albany Fort and his counterpart at Moose Fort, James Duffield (1740), believed that "their surgeons were trying to kill them, a plot for which there is no evidence." [The Beaver, Spring 1979] Indeed, after Kitchin sent Miles home to England in 1774, that Chief Factor reported to London that he had several other men he wished he could send home as "he has no confidence in them and conspiracies of murder [are] no mere farce". Paranoia, it seems, as well as "distemper" often came with the territory.

The sameness of their lives was accentuated by their meals. For most of the year Miles and his mates sat down to meals of beer, fried peas and salted meat. The latter was usually beef or pork shipped in from England or geese hunted during the seasonal migrations. In summer the diet was supplemented by dandelions, nettles, berries and, if an early frost or storm hadn't destroyed the gardens as happened in both 1772 and

Moose Fork

Meus Debtis

D^y 100

Brought forward - 7 11 9

Seeded Glovers - Doz 1 - - 6

Caps - 100 - 6 9

Willy - 1/2 do A - 6 -

Rich Longport L.O. 5.

Linklater Hugh D.
of Albany Fort R. 91
1st White Poin - No 8 - A -
Thos turn'd Soals. P. 3 - 56

Ex 48 Ex 47

Wiles, John¹⁰ D.
 Brandy ————— Gall^{ns} 2 15 —
 Cloth blue plain ——— Y^d 1/2 — 3 3
 ——— red d. ——— 3/4 — 1 10
 6 Suffolk red broad ——— 1/2 — 2 —

Hamrells	Y ^h	2	3
Shoes turn'd soles	P. 2	88	-
Pumps	2	88	-
Stockings grey knit	2	6	-

Robbed roll English Bds	3	3
Twine African	n ^o 8	8 6
Sugar	lbs 12	9
Deer Skin	n ^o 8	3

Paper - *Duire 8 -- 8 --*

J^r. Mills

E. J. 8. 10. 7.

L. S. 5 12 10.

Assets Debts

Wm. Alexander ^{Junr.} P & T

Prays red	Y ^e	1/2	1	1	1
Blankets	n ^o	3	1	1	1
Brandy	Galt	12	3	1	1
Cloth Blue blaine	Y ^e	1/2	3	3	1

Comb	n: 8	8	✓
Flammelle	q: 2 1/2	3	9 ✓

Gloves Looking	1	1	1
Shirt check'd bl. ^{ue}	1	1	1
Shoes turn'd sole leather	5	6	1
Stockings grey knit	2	6	1
Throat	1	6	1

Tobacco leaf	Rs 8	1	✓
Twine	Rs 1	1	6 ✓

Sugar ————— lbs 20 1 1 —

Needles & Glaciers 100 100 100
Soap 100 100 100

Alex^r Mear
 Esq^r (1877) L 7.3 -

1 Cheay William D

1. Brandy — 3 10

1 Tobacco leaf — Rs 1 — 2 — ✓
1 — 20 1 1 — ✓

Paper — Quire 8 — 8 —

Wm Otway. Feb 14 - 1

La 28. 1877

1773, perhaps lettuce or walnut-sized potatoes. Bad as this was, it sometimes got worse. For the Cree out on the "plantation", winter was a time of hunger and the threat of starvation a spectre that grew as the temperature dropped. In the winter of 1772 that spectre reached into the fort itself and the men's food rations were reduced almost a third.

Some of the men sought escape from this world in "bumbo", a mixture of rum, water, sugar and nutmeg. To some it became the object of all activity, leading not a few to a "Northwestern's Death", suicide. To others it led to a shortened career; the surgeon at Moose Fort in 1740 was described as a "complete Swob" constantly thirsting for liquor and later, Robert Watson, master of the sloop *Beaver*, had his contract cancelled because he was so "Adducted to liquor". Kitchin even attributed the death of his predecessor, Chief Factor Garbutt to excessive drinking.

Miles purchased his share of brandy; the Moose Fort Account Book showing that he bought from eight to twelve gallons each year. This amount was about average for the servants at Moose Fort, but, as the Committee men back in London noted, was double the quantity taken at Albany Fort. Those in London wondered if some of this excess was being used to trade, privately and illegally, with the Indians.

With minds and hands sometimes rum-befuddled, accidents from falls, cutting wood and the every-day chores of manhandling heavy loads were not infrequent. Miles hurt his hand at the forge in the summer of 1772 and his assistant, Trolio, lost part of his hand in 1774 when his musquet burst. At other times men went snow-blind or drowned. Even boredom sometimes led to tragedy; the Moose Fort Correspondence Book records that in December of 1768, before Miles arrived, John Kipling entered the cabin of Armourer William Cooley and, in horseplay, cocked a gun. It discharged accidentally, killing another servant, Christopher Hull.

Disease, especially arthritis and pneumonia, also crippled and killed. The limited diet insured slow healing and, often, broken bones that would not mend. Miles witnessed one such episode when a pushing match between the tailor, John Levach, and Richard Lovegrove, a laborer, resulted in a broken arm and collar bone for Lovegrove. The arm never healed and the man was permanently crippled. Scurvy, too, was an ever-present reality at the Bayside; its rapid spread limited, to a degree, by garden grown currants and strawberries. Spruce beer was also useful as an anti-scorbutic, but the scurvy, on occasion, rendered half the men incapable of duty.

In January of 1773 Miles and John Horne, sloop master, were sent as the winter packet to Albany Fort. The packet, a combination of letters and exchange of small supplies between the chief factors, was usually the only contact between the two posts during the win-



A "Miles" musket made in 1799 for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Miles supplied that state with 4,000 muskets.

ter months. It was an assignment given only to experienced travelers, for ninety miles of uncharted wilderness and over thirty streams, most unnamed even today, separated the two stations. Two men, pulling a toboggan could cover the distance in four days, but snowstorms and gale winds off the Bay made the journey always difficult and dangerous. To minimize the risk the packet was usually sent out in January, the coldest month, when the streams would be frozen solid and the risk of heavy snow reduced. Nothing about the weather could be guaranteed, of course. Only a year before, another servant, James Forker, had become lost in a January storm and perished just two miles from Eastmain Post.

The two men left on the 5th, a Tuesday; the day was clear, the air sharp. The following day, however, a northwest wind picked up and the drifting snow obscured the trail. On Thursday as they neared the ridge at Cockispenny Point, a spruce covered promontory jutting out into the Bay, Miles fell and injured his leg. By the next morning the foot was so badly swollen it could no longer fit into the snowshoes. Travel without these was an impossibility. Both men knew

that if Miles was to survive he would have to reach shelter quickly. Horne would have to proceed to Albany Fort alone and get help. With luck he would be back in three days with men to carry Miles to safety. He delayed his departure for a short while as he helped Miles gather firewood, more precious now than food. He placed the pieces near the small fire that Miles tended. Then, with a few words of encouragement, he was gone; the sound of his laboured breathing quickly swallowed up by the wind, his tracks by the drifting snow.

Miles was alone — almost alone. For several hours the activities of the two men had been carefully watched. This winter had been a lean time for all the hunters of the woods, man and beast. Now, a gray timber wolf, a hundred pounds of muscle and jaws, its mottled fur contrasting sharply with the white fur of its throat, lay in the bush just yards from Miles's huddled figure.

We know the weather over the next few days remained bitterly cold, with a biting northwest wind. And, we know that for part of that time a gibbous moon shone down on the stricken traveler; but the rest — the pain, the creeping numbness of the cold and the fear Miles must have experienced — can only be imagined by us; the details are buried with him. The Albany Post Journal records simply:

It is very remarkable that a wolf lurked a few yards of John Miles all the time he was by himself and it is probable would have seized him, but for his fire.

On Sunday evening, the 10th, Horne stumbled into Albany Post. Totally exhausted from his thirty-five mile forced trek, he could only report that Miles was "on the ridge, Moose (south) side of Cockispenny Point". At daybreak two men, James Robertson and John Kipling, were sent to his rescue. They reached him early the next day; he had been on the trail a week and by himself four days. He was near death. Hoisted onto a sled, Miles was hauled, feverish and his body racked with chills, to the post at Albany. Helped by Surgeon Jarvis who met them a half day out, rescued and rescuers reached safety on the 15th. Jarvis made note that Miles's hands were much "mortified".

For two weeks Miles's body fought the pneumonia. At times he slipped into deliriums, but, amazingly, kept hidden from the doctor the fact that one of his toes was badly frozen. Humphrey Marten recorded in the Post Journal that the toe was "in almost a mortifying condition he [Miles] having neglected to inform Mr. Jarvis of it". Miles, no doubt, had decided to trust the recovery of his limbs to his own youth and stamina, not the surgeon's saw. As late as the 20th he was still feverish and "full of pain", but by the 23rd the Journal records "John Miles, tho' exceedingly weak, yet out



The cemetery at Moose Factory. The sword-shaped marker in the foreground is possibly similar to one for which Miles made a "board" when Chief Factor Garbutt died in 1772.

of danger, blessed be God for it". Within the week Armourer Miles, grateful to be alive, bought "all hands (a round of) brandy". His hands were still bad; he could not sign the debt book, but it was witnessed by John Favell, second-in-charge at the post. By mid-February he was sufficiently recovered to work with the Albany Post blacksmith. As noted earlier, it was to be taught the art of tempering the ironwork that Miles was sent on the almost-fatal trip.

In early March, his feet still too swollen to wear snowshoes, Miles limped and hobbled his way back to Moose Fort. Even with two men helping him the return journey took almost seven days. At Moose Fort Chief Factor Kitchin felt that Miles was "all hearty and well, except his frozen toes which he will soon get the best of". In reality, Miles did not recover quickly. Before month's end he was again sick; another relapse followed in late April. Trolio, the Eskimo, had to be used in Miles's stead — "our armourer is not able to do anything in his branch of business".

When his contract expired in 1774, Miles, at first, indicated he would accept a new contract at an increase in salary. In fact, he did sign on for three more years. At the last possible moment he changed his mind. Early on the 20th of September, as the *Prince Rupert*

made final preparations for its return to England and Kitchin was, literally, closing the Post Journal for shipment home. Miles appeared before the chief factor and demanded passage to England. Kitchin, understandably, was livid with anger. Miles's departure would leave the post without a gunsmith for an entire year. But, he had no choice. He "discharged the armourer from the Factory". Later, Kitchin would describe Miles as a "Man of a very contumacious disposition" and claim that Miles had been "guilty of much insolences toward me".

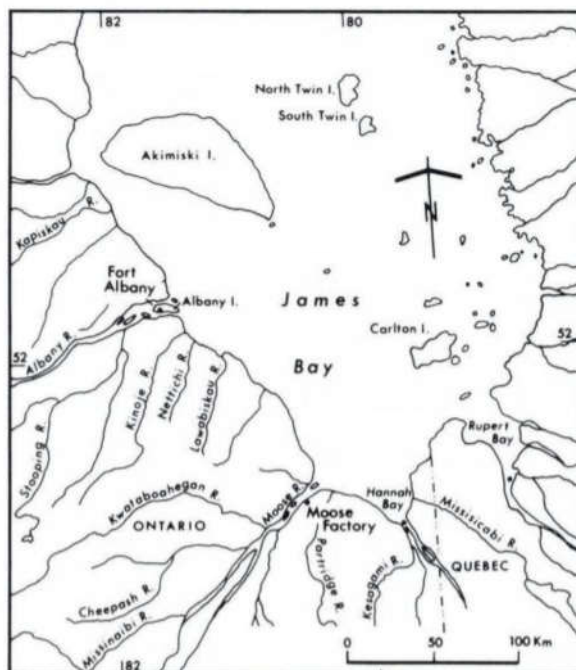
Miles's companions aboard the *Prince Rupert* included David Hatt; Hatt's return was almost as "last minute" as Miles's. Two weeks before he had threatened to crush Chief Factor Kitchin's head with one of the heavy iron bars off the front gate and so won himself an early trip home. Also on board was Matthew Cocking, the Company servant who had explored the Saskatchewan Valley area in 1772, and Humphrey Marten, who had served at Albany Post during Miles's recuperation there. Marten had recorded that "Miles hath behaved well" while at Albany; no doubt the two shared some reminiscences and some brandy on the trip home.

Both Cocking and Marten would return to the Bay. In 1781 they both faced a smallpox epidemic and, a year later, an invasion by the French. When the French captured Fort Churchill from Samuel Hearne in the summer of 1782, Cocking managed to escape in a sloop. Not as lucky, Marten surrendered York Fort. Both Hearne and Marten remained prisoners of the French for some time.

The journey home to England was uneventful. Thirty-eight days out of Moose Factory, the *Prince Rupert* sailed up the Thames past Gravesend Beach, past Limehouse Reach and, on 28 October 1774, docked at the Company warehouse. Alongside was the *King George*, just returned from York Fort.

It was not unknown for returning Company servants to try to smuggle furs home. Detection meant the loss of accumulated wages. Despite the risk enough had succeeded at this bit of private enterprise to force the Company to search all the passenger chests and trunks as they were unloaded. Even the package of 'Natural Curiosities' — fish skeletons, bird feathers, etc. — destined as a gift to the Royal Family was inspected. Having passed this final bit of scrutiny John Miles descended the gangplank and set foot, once again, on the cobbled streets of London.

The London to which Miles returned had changed little in his absence; the world, however, was changing rapidly. As he disembarked from the *Prince Rupert* the American Continental Congress was meeting in Philadelphia. In six month's time eight militia-men would die on Lexington Green and England and her American colony would be at war. In January 1775,



a month after receiving back wages of about £50 from the Company (and from the account of Richard Lovegrove, a labourer remaining at Moose Fort — he of the unhealed broken arm — the sum of £2 16s) John Miles married seventeen year old Mary State. They would have seven children. Three years later he joined the London City Militia, as a sergeant of the Yellow Regiment. He served with this unit during the London "Gordon Riots" of 1780. In 1786 he moved to Birmingham to enter the button and thread business with his uncle, the inventor John Miles. This was the same uncle who had taken Miles in as a child. Sadly, the business venture failed and the two men parted and remained estranged. Shortly thereafter, Miles emigrated to America, settling in Philadelphia where he opened a "Gun and Pistol Manufactory". He supplied weapons for the Commonwealths of Pennsylvania and Virginia. These are much sought after today by collectors. He died, age fifty-five, in May 1808 and was buried at Torresdale, Pennsylvania. His oldest son, John Miles, Jr., also became a gunsmith and served as an officer in the New Jersey Detached Militia during the War of 1812. ♦

A graduate of the College of the City of New York and Brown University, Michael D. Woods is a teacher in the East Islip, New York, school system.

Where Flowers Forever Bloom

A VICTORIAN ARTIST
AT THE EDGE OF THE PACIFIC



By John Hayman



It is not altogether clear why Edmund Coleman (1823?-92) journeyed to Vancouver Island in 1862. On one occasion, he remarked on his "intention of going to the mines of Cariboo," and on another occasion of his eagerness "to leave the beaten paths of the European ice-fields for the unexplored heights of the West." Presumably he also imagined that the landscape of the Northwest would offer fresh subjects for his drawings.

In 1849, he had exhibited at the Royal Academy in London an epic painting entitled *Alexander the Great visits the Temple of Jupiter Ammon*. Subsequently, he had specialised in English landscapes. Then, in 1859, he had published a sumptuous volume entitled *Scenes from the snow-fields; being illustrations of the upper ice-world of Mont Blanc, from sketches made on the spot in the years 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858; with historical and descriptive remarks, and a comparison of the Chamonix and St. Gervais routes*.

The coloured lithographs in this publication impressively render both geological formations and the slightness of man in this awesome setting, and the text also reveals Coleman's literary aspirations. The volume is dedicated to John Ruskin — "Whose Eloquent Exposition of the Beauties and Attributes of Mountain Scenery Entitles Him To The Gratitude of Every Student of Art and Lover of Nature." Coleman displays his indebtedness to Ruskin in numerous ways, not least in his tendency to moralise. "May we not find," he asks rhetorically, "in the ascent of a great mountain, incidents which bear a close analogy to our daily life?" Pursuing this analogy, Coleman then discovers a pilgrim's progress in his account of a route. Part I he entitles "Aspiration," and Part II, "Probation." Then, with a change of analogy, he introduces "Darkness" (Part III) and "Light" (Part IV), perhaps influenced here by Ruskin's distinction in *Modern Painters* (1856) between "Mountain Gloom" and "Mountain Glory". After so diligently following in the footsteps of Ruskin, Coleman may well have been disappointed that his mentor and guide never acknowledged the dedication. But he was able to cite favourable reviews of his book in later years, and he was recalled at the time of his death as one of the earliest Alpine artists in Britain.

Scenes from the snow-fields also ensured that Coleman arrived in Victoria with the status of artist, author, and mountaineer, and the first mention of him in the *Colonist* was fittingly under the heading "A Celebrity" (12 March 1863). In the article itself, the writer noted that Coleman had been making "a series of landscape views of Victoria and environs which reflect high credit upon his ability as a landscape painter." Ominously, the notice continued: "This is a very limited community for a professional painter to find remunerative employment, though our scenery offers an unequalled field to the painter."

The following year, Coleman applied for the position of artist on the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition, a venture that was supported by both private and public funds. In his letter of application (11 May 1864), he noted:

As a member of the Alpine Club of London I have twice ascended to the summit of Mt. Blanc, the loftiest mountain in Europe; I was the first traveller to make the passage of the Col de Miage, one of the highest snow covered Cols in the Alps. I also made the first ascent of the Aiguille de Miage.

Subsequently, on 23 May, he provided the selection committee with some specimens of his work. Among them was a watercolour of Nanaimo that he had completed in two hours. Pencil sketches might be executed more rapidly, he remarked — in "10 minutes if need be." Clearly, there was some urgency behind Coleman's application for the position, but he was not chosen. Instead, Frederick Whympers (1838-1901) was appointed, partly because he was a younger man who might be expected to withstand better the rigours of the expedition. Coleman was, however, to take advantage of the expedition's findings, since the *Colonist* (23 January 1865) subsequently remarked on his drawings of Leech River, where gold had been discovered by the explorers. These drawings, the *Colonist* observed, are "worthy of being copied by the *Illustrated News*". Again, though, it was Whympers who was successful in placing engravings of his drawings in that journal.

A modest lift in Coleman's fortunes was to occur when he was chosen from twenty-four applicants for the position of Librarian of the Mechanics' Literary Institute in Victoria (*Colonist*, 1 May 1865), but he seems at this time to have been more intent on scaling the "unexplored heights of the West". In particular, he wanted to be among the first to climb Mount Baker.

Again, Coleman was at the outset to experience failure — and on two separate occasions. On his first attempt in 1866, the expedition party was turned back by hostile Indians after journeying between forty to fifty miles up the Skagit River. Robert Brown, the leader of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition, was a member of this group, but he did not take part in the second attempt. On this second exploration, Coleman reported that he came within fifty feet of the summit, but a sheer wall of ice prevented a final ascent.

Two years were to elapse before Coleman was able to attempt the ascent of Mount Baker again, and this time the party was successful. Coleman's account of the expedition of 1868, illustrated by his own drawings, subsequently appeared in *Harper's Magazine* (November, 1869), in an article for which he received "something more substantial than thanks" (*Colonist*, 21 June 1869).



E.T. Coleman, "Studio in the Mountains" from *Harper's Magazine*, November 1869. "With the aid of Indians and a four-point blanket, I improvised a very convenient sketching tent."

Coleman's account displays the literary aspirations that had been apparent in *Scenes from the snow-fields*. There is an attempt at dramatic suspense, for example, when Coleman writes of a critical point in the enterprise:

Here we leave the outskirts of civilization; our path henceforward will be through a howling wilderness tenanted by wild animals, through dense and trackless forests where the light of the sun never enters, across maddening torrents and precipitous rapids, and along over-hanging precipices.

As in his earlier work on the Alps, Coleman found an allegorical significance in his journey. In describing his descent, he writes:

The illustration on page 27 is E.T. Coleman's "Mount Baker from Cedar Hill near Victoria". It was published in *Harper's Magazine*, November 1869. Cedar Hill is the name formerly given to Mount Douglas.

The sudden change from eternal winter to the beauty of spring, from spring to summer, from the abodes of over-whelming chaos to fairer scenes, from death, as it were, unto life, is inexpressibly soothing to the overwrought mind and body. No longer at war with the terrible forces of nature, softer emotions take possession of the breast. . . . There came upon my spirit a feeling of renewed youth, . . . of a purer life, of resolves strengthened, of doubts subdued, of faith quickened, of a spirit no longer repining and tortured with self reproach, . . . and I deeply realized the exquisite beauty of Carlyle's imagery of life being no longer "a dark wasteful chaos, but a blooming, fertile, heaven-encompassed world".

In the same year that he climbed Mount Baker, Coleman's literary aspirations were also rewarded. He won a prize awarded by the Literary Institute of Victoria for his essay "*On the Beauties of the Scenery as Surveyed from Beacon Hill*".

In this essay, the influence of Carlyle and Ruskin are once more apparent. Lifting a celebrated phrase from Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), Coleman describes the external world as "the visible living gar-



Government Street, Victoria, from the corner of Fort Street, looking north, 1860s.

ment of God," and he develops this religious understanding by the Ruskinian idea that mountains are in particular "an everlasting monument of the Creator's power". But the essay is not simply a transplant of attitudes to be gathered from English literary culture. Coleman aims also to express his individual attitude to the Northwest, and it is the complication of his viewpoint that is finally of interest. On the one hand, he sees himself as at the centre of creation on the summit of Beacon Hill; the panorama provides an "epitome of the Universe". And yet Coleman also sees his life in Victoria as an "exile" — insubstantially linked with "the big world" by the mail steamer. Victoria's environs are celebrated as a world apart — pristine in their remoteness from the turmoil of the modern world — and yet Coleman looks forward as well to a future when the region will be bustling with prosperity. The prize essay, after apparently recommending the value of contemplation amid nature, ends with the injunction: "Be up and doing."

Perhaps Coleman aimed to remove himself from such divided attitudes by busying himself, whether by climbing, sketching, or writing. There are brief references throughout his writings to his feeling "jaded and depressed, sick of the monotonous round of ordinary occupation," and it would seem that he adopted the "gospel of work" that was so urgently preached by Carlyle and Ruskin as a way of lifting his periodic low spirits.

Certainly, Coleman was always up and doing. Immediately after climbing Mount Baker, he contemplated the ascent of Mount Rainier. When this expedition proved impractical in 1869, he travelled extensively throughout Washington Territory, later recording his experience in "Puget Sound, and the Northern Pacific Railroad" in *Illustrated Travels*. In this article, he quite explicitly wrote of the value of travel to one who tended to depression:

Blessings on the this art of travel! . . . Are you sick, way-weary, and lifeweary, take a dose of fresh air, and "throw physic to the dogs." One plunges into a moral vapour-bath, and comes out a new man. Our purse lined with a sufficiency for the trip, with the last new sensation novel in our trunk, we defy the blues.

In the summer of 1870, Coleman set about the ascent of Mount Rainier in earnest. At the end of June, he left for Olympia, the *Colonist* (29 June) noting that he "intended settling permanently in the adjacent territory." *Illustrated Travels* was again to publish his account of the ascent, but on this occasion Coleman wrote at a disadvantage, since he had failed to gain the summit "by reason of a disaster". Specifically, he records how he became separated from other members of the expedition "who were bent on 'doing it,' and had got the start of me." Consequently, upon arriving at a cliff face, he attempted to scale it, so that he

would not be left far behind, but it was so steep that his heavy pack threatened to drag him backwards off the rocks. He therefore threw off his pack, supposing that it would lodge against a bush or rock and was dismayed to see it disappear down the mountainside. Without pack, he was forced to return to base camp and contemplate how he might make the ascent alone.

A rather different account of Coleman's misfortune is provided by Hazard Stevens, who, with Philemon Beecher van Trump, seems almost to have attained the summit. In an article in *The Atlantic Magazine* (November, 1876) Stevens writes:

Coleman lagged behind from the start, and at intervals his voice could be heard hallooing and calling upon us to wait. Towards sunset we reached a level terrace, or bench, and waited for Coleman, who, we supposed, could not be far below. He not appearing, we halloed again and again. No answer! We then sent Sluiskin [an Indian guide] down the mountain to his aid. After an hour's absence the Indian returned. He had descended, he said, a long distance, and at last caught sight of Coleman. He was near the foot of the mountain, had thrown away his pack, blankets and all, and was evidently returning to camp. And Sluiskin finished his account with

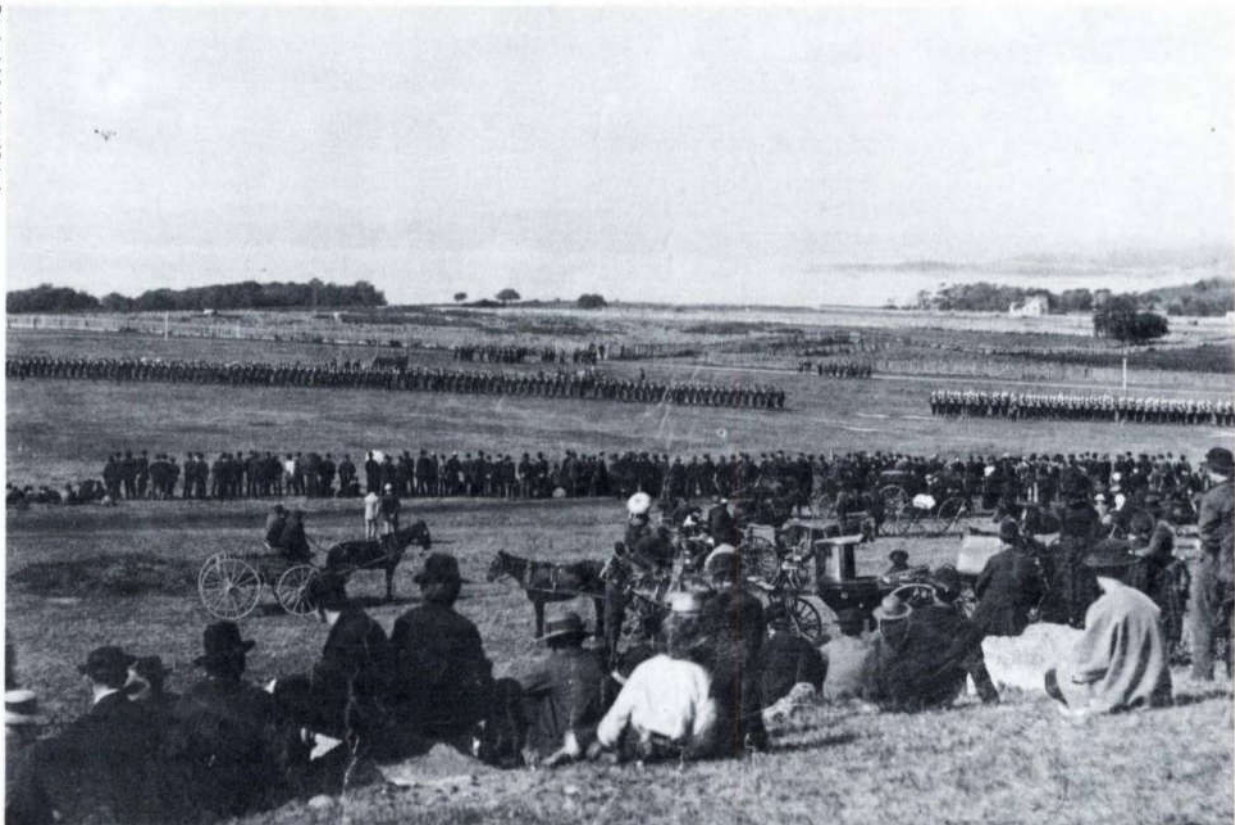
expressions of contempt for the "cultus King George man".

It seems, however, to have been Stevens just as much as Sluiskin who felt contempt, since his account frequently and unfairly ridicules Coleman. At no point, for example, does it take into sympathetic consideration Coleman's age, and yet Coleman was not far short of fifty at this time and some twenty years older than Stevens. If it is true, as a recent study has persuasively argued, that Coleman probably planned and equipped the expedition, and was then virtually abandoned by Stevens and van Trump who improperly claimed an ascent that they did not fully accomplish, Coleman's fellow-climbers may even have felt some sense of guilt and subsequently ridiculed Coleman in a contorted form of self-defence.

Certainly, Stevens is unjust in his account of the equipment Coleman brought on the expedition. Stevens describes this, as it was set out in a hotel room prior to their departure:

The floor was literally covered with his traps, and he exhibited them one by one, expatiating upon their various uses. There was his ground-sheet, a large gum blanket equally serviceable to Mr. Coleman as

Colonists celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday at Beacon Hill on a 24 May sometime in the late 1860s.



Provincial Archives, Victoria

a tent in camp and a bath-tub at the hotel. There was a strong rope to which we were all to be tied when climbing the snow-fields, so that if one fell into a chasm the other could hold him up. The "cree-pers" were a clumsy, heavy arrangement of iron spikes made to fasten on the foot with chains and straps, in order to prevent slipping on the ice. He had an ice-axe for cutting steps, a spirit-lamp for making tea on the mountains, green goggles for snow-blindness, deer's fat for the face, Alpine staffs, needles and thread, twine, tacks, screws, screw-driver, gimlet, file, several medical prescriptions, two boards for pressing flowers, sketching materials, and in fact every article that Mr. Coleman in his extensive reading had found used or recommended by travelers. Every one of these he regarded as indispensable.

This portrait of Coleman as an armchair traveler is altogether unfair. He was a seasoned alpinist who had just two years previously climbed Mount Baker. Moreover, his equipment was entirely appropriate for the planned ascent. In an ultimate insult, Stevens and van Trump were to use much of it after they left Coleman behind. Granted all this, it is extraordinary that Coleman's published account of the expedition is not bitter. He seems to have been exceptionally patient and long-suffering.

Following the expedition on Mount Rainier, Coleman settled in Portland, Oregon. Then, in 1873, he set out for the east coast on the first stage of his return to England. His trans-continental journey is described in "A Third-Class Passenger's Journey Across America" — a title with some pathos, since it seems that Coleman had been reduced to this class. Fortunately, he again experienced the lift that he associated with travel. As he observed, most people were traveling west at this time, and consequently he was able to spread out all his worldly possessions and improvise a comfortable bed from unoccupied seats. "A feeling of exhilaration possesses the traveler," Coleman assures the reader, "and one revels in a sense of space, boundless, illimitable as that of the great deep."

Back in England, Coleman exhibited some sketches of British Columbia at the Alpine Club in December 1873, and he also wrote "Mountains and Mountaineering in the Far West" for *The Alpine Journal* (1877-78). But his career seems not to have prospered, and his publications became increasingly defensive.

In 1887, for example, the *Seattle Tribune* published an article challenging Coleman's estimates of the heights of mountains in the Northwest and describing Coleman himself as "a good deal of a humbug." The article continued: "He went with Messrs. Hazard Stevens and P.B. van Trump to climb Rainier, a number of years ago," the article continued, "and while they went to the top, he stayed at the half-way point." This article was re-printed in the *Colonist*, and it elicited

an understandably aggrieved letter from Coleman. In printing Coleman's letter, the *Colonist* (8 December 1877) acknowledged its author to have been "anything but a humbug," and Coleman provided a defence that was both spirited and saddening:

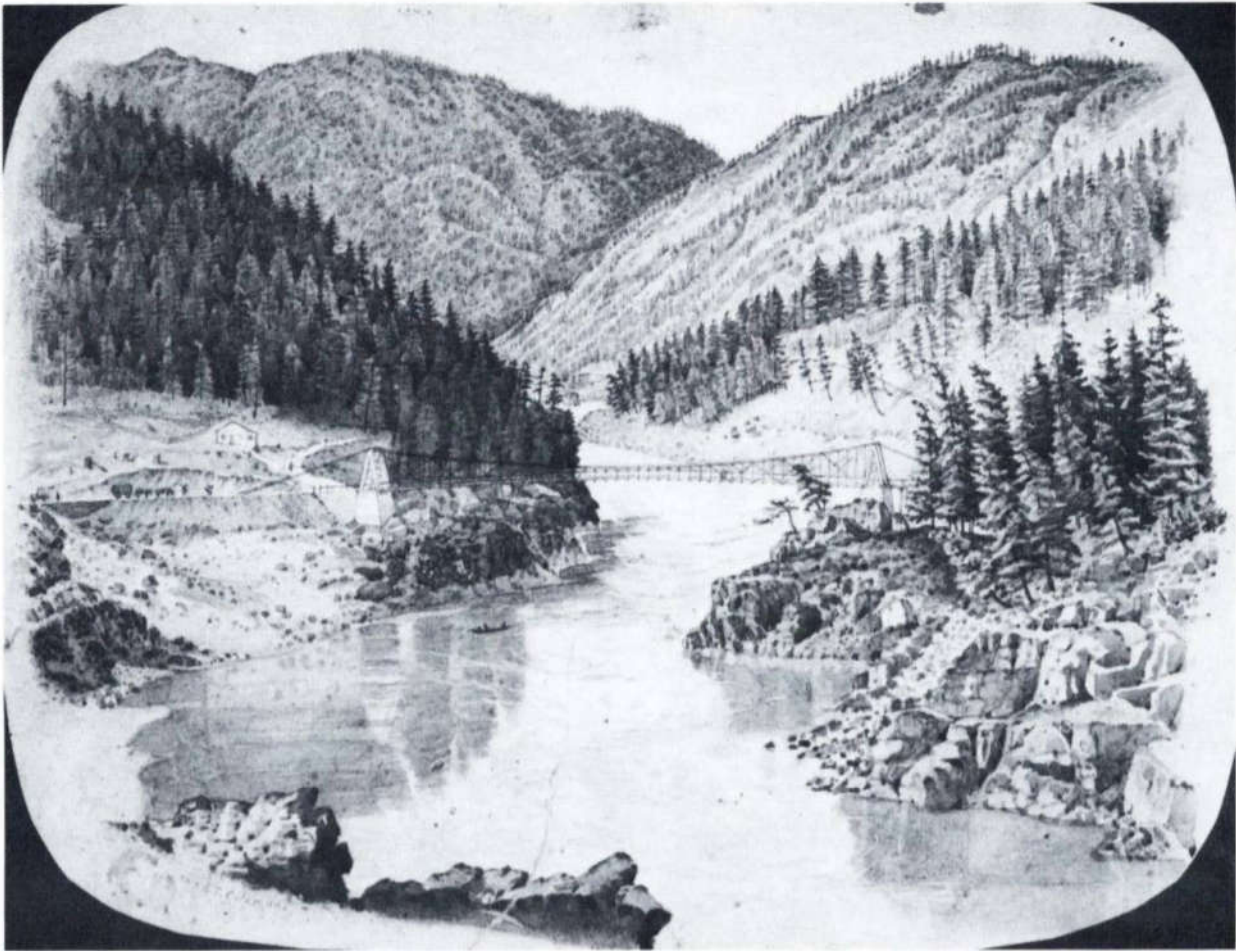
I put it to you, sir, is it likely that anyone would go to the trouble, expense, and hard work which the ascent of a great mountain involves merely for the purpose of sitting down half way? As it was my money, time and trouble were thrown away, for I neither gained glory nor profit.

An even greater disappointment and gloom seem to have settled on Coleman's final years. By an odd irony, we last hear of him in an account of his death by Robert Brown, with whom he had been acquainted in Victoria. In a letter to F. Dally, the photographer, Brown wrote in 1895: "Poor Coleman you know shot himself in the doorway of St. Martin Church. It was a horrible affair." Confronted by this stark fact — and the apparent absence of obituaries — one realizes that Coleman's earlier references to depressed spirits and jaded nerves were not merely literary gestures. His brave attempts to climb mountains and record his experiences in uplifting words and images seem the more poignant. There is some relief in turning to that exceptional year in Coleman's life — 1868 — when he won an essay prize and reached the summit of a mountain. At least parts of the essay deserve to be re-discovered.

From "On the Beauties of the Scenery as Surveyed from Beacon Hill" (1868) by E.T. Coleman:

The panorama commanded from this site, is probably not excelled at any other city in the world, and may be said to be an epitome of the Universe. It embraces hill and dale, the rugged cliff and the gentle slope, the woodland and the forest, the smiling city and the mighty ocean — on the one hand civilization, and on the other barbarism, and the howling wilderness. Above all, it displays those towering masses, ever marked features of the earth, but pre-eminently conspicuous on this coast. These have their culminating point in Mt. Baker, one of the great peaks of the Pacific. Looking at this mountain, which stands up as a lonely sentinel of the silent land, with its hoary head far above the adjacent ridges, and its breast covered with the soft and shining snow, we are all the more interested remembering that from that summit, now smooth and peaceful, have belched forth volcanic flames and burning stones, and that beneath that breast of unsullied white lie the scoriae and lava thrown out from the earth by forces that may shake a continent. This fact has caused it to occupy the attention of those who considered the causes of the shocks of earthquakes which from time to time agitate the coast.

Following a park-like glade on the outskirts of the

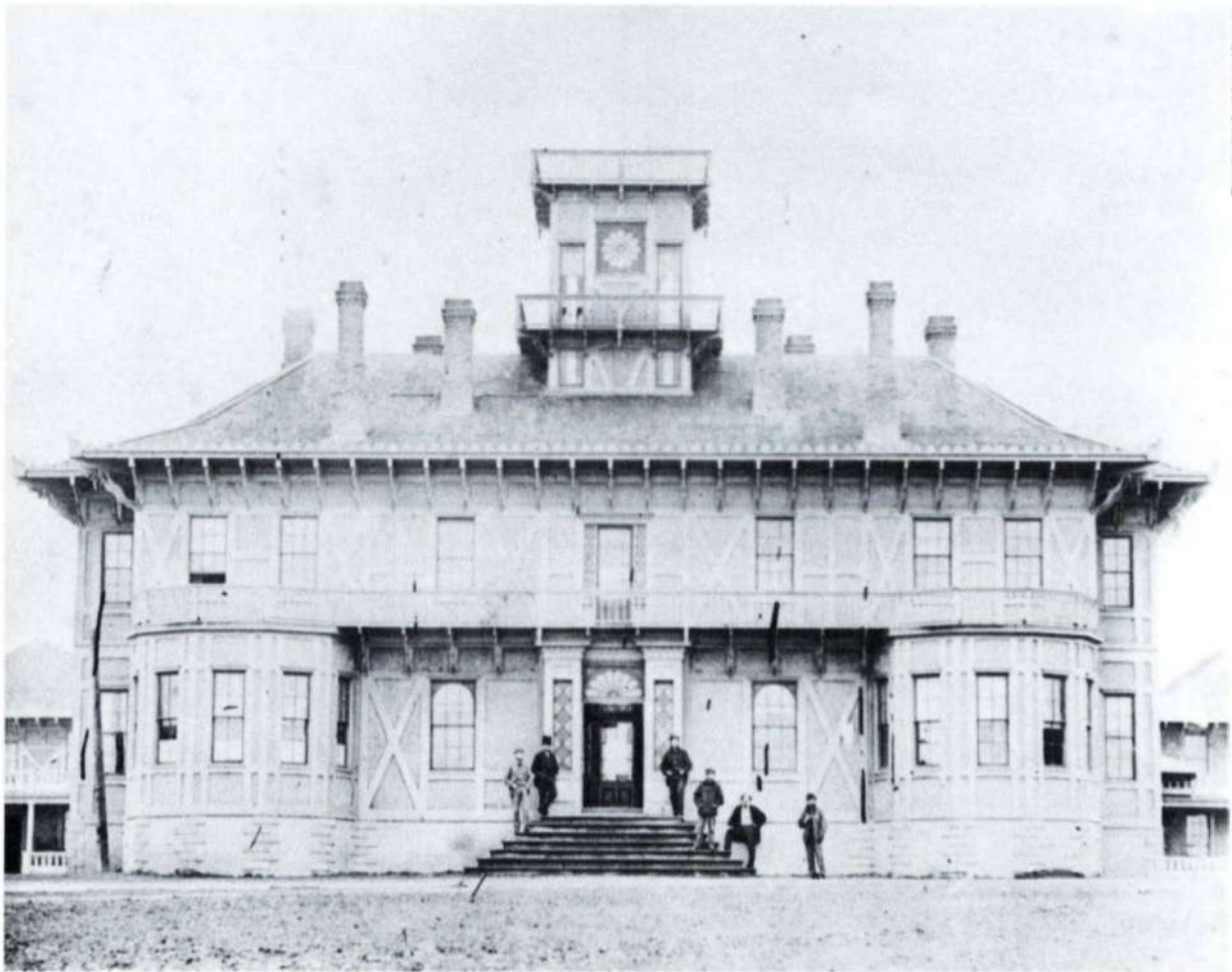


E.T. Coleman, "Alexandra Bridge". This bridge across the lower Fraser Canyon was opened in September 1863. Coleman made the drawing for Joseph Trutch, the contractor.

city, the visitor from Victoria enters a broad, open space about a mile and a half in circumference, dotted with clumps of dwarf oak and fern, and bordered with stately pines mingled with oaks. It is open on one side to the sea, with its sheltered bays and nooks, where grassy slopes kiss the water's edge, and where the tender green of the copses, filled with alder, willow and cotton-wood, forms a pleasing contrast to the dark foliage of the pines. Ascending the rising knoll, we stand upon Beacon Hill, and find ourselves at once in the centre of a charmed circle, as if some Prospero had waved his magic wand and evoked a scene of enchantment. Beneath our feet is the greensward strewn with flowers of every hue; immediately around, is a magnificent combination of the park and the forest; whilst beyond, is the old and hoary sea rolling against the base of yonder snow-capped mountains that encircle the horizon.

On a fine day, looking towards the north, Victoria is seen from this spot to great advantage. The upper portion of the city being on an elevated plateau,

reveals its white walls and houses sparkling in the sun, and glimpses of its churches and public buildings are seen at intervals through the dark masses of foliage. The cathedral, standing by itself, is prominent in the view of the city, and in the distance rises Cedar Hill, whose jagged outline is dotted with firs. The summit of Beacon Hill appears to have been formerly used as an Indian burial ground, and bears some resemblance to an Anglo-Saxon tumulus, or barrow. We may suppose that here there were formerly displayed flags, painted images of wood, and the picturesque accompaniments still to be seen in other portions of the island. Imagination cannot help picturing the solemn spectacle that must have taken place at the burial of chiefs who were here laid, amid the sad chanting of the waves and the wailing of the winds, in a temple not made with hands, its walls the everlasting mountains, its roof the blue dome of heaven, whilst the moaning sea has repeated their dirge throughout the rolling centuries.



Central portion of the old "Bird Cages" government buildings in Victoria, late 1860s. Photograph by Frederick Dally.

In the spring season of the year the flowers cover the ground. The slopes round Beacon Hill are one blaze of yellow and gold, "you can scarce see the grass for flowers." The variety and beauty of the flora of this island have been often described. Every fortnight brings a succession. There are the crocus, the lily, the yellow pansy, the purple violet, the blue lupin, the tiger lily, the campanula and lark-spur, the columbine pendant like a fuchsia, the wild currant with its crimson flowers, and chief among others a kind of hyacinth, named the "camass" by the Indians, who often go forth in droves to dig its roots. There are also the sweet briar and the wild rose, the perfume of which, wafted on the cool sea breeze and mingled with the odorous scent of the pines, converts the wilderness into a garden. In the cultivated lands the most gorgeous combinations and vivid contrasts present themselves, the lupin being seen in vast sheets of bluish purple, together with the crimson red of the wild sorrel and the bright yellow of the buttercup.

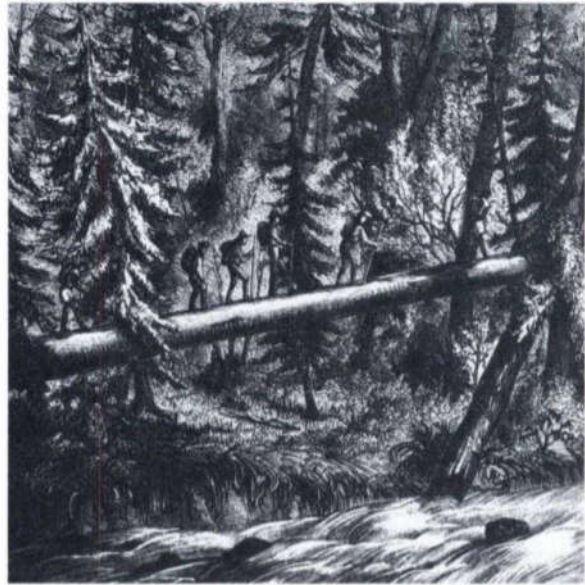
Looking towards the west, the scenery, although of a more sombre character, is not unmixed with pleasing elements, particularly when seen at sunset. There are the Goldstream mountains clothed with pines from base to summit, their graceful and undulating outline extends towards the promontory of Sooke, opposite Race Rocks, and contrasts well with the stern and rugged peaks of the Olympian range in Washington Territory beyond.

... In contrast with these eternal snows, as yet unsullied by the foot of man, are the blue waters which separate us from the American shore, bearing on their bosom yonder stately ship freighted for a distant port, and yonder small canoe creeping along the shore, which with its squalid occupants, harmonizes well with the desolate grandeur of the scenery. We behold man, who has bent the powers of nature to his easy motion, side by side with the savage, who, in his rude craft, still struggles against them. This contrast is rendered all the more striking by the appearance of the mail steamer, which links

this green isle of the sea to the big world beyond and brings to its exiled denizens tidings of those that are far away.

The most imposing portion of the panorama is toward the east, where, across the Gulf of Georgia, the great snow-covered peaks of the Cascade range rear their jagged crests on the far horizon. . . . But the culminating point of the view is unquestionably Mt. Baker, whose great peak, clad in pure white, rises in solitary majesty to a height estimated at between 12,000 and 13,000 feet. It is remarkable for its beauty of outline, and bears a considerable resemblance in this respect to the Jungfrau, the Queen of the Bernese range of the Alps. . . . The great height of this mountain is rendered the more apparent from the circumstances of there being no other peaks in the immediate neighbourhood to dwarf it, and also from the comparatively low height of the hills intervening between the spectator and its base. A group of pines in the foreground with their dark foliage also enhances the brilliant effect of the snow.

After the torpor and gloom of the winter, nothing can be more inspiring than a walk to Beacon Hill. Freed from the din of the city, its gnawing cares, its feverish excitement, we breathe a while the purer atmosphere and revel in the sense of space. Reposing upon the greensward, we yield ourselves up to the contemplation of the scene. Its grandeur and beauty sink into the heart — the clear sky, the balmy air, the plash of the waves, the warble of birds, the voices of happy childhood, give a tone to the jaded nerves — all sterner passions yield to quieter emotions of tranquility, of tenderness and peace. Lulled into a reverie the present fades away, Fancy weaves her spell and takes possession — she sees: a smiling land, a great city crowded with stately edifices, its broad streets resounding with "the hum, the shock of men," its wharves crowded with merchandise, its garners filled with the wealth of the Indies, its ports sheltering the flags of all nations, its ships covering every sea — she sees a cathedral with tapering spire and fretted pinnacle of enduring stone, rivalling England's proudest structures, while mansion after mansion, homestead after homestead greets the eye — she sees through the length and breadth of the land those barren rocks yielding up their ore, the solitary places resounding with the stroke of the anvil and the forge, the desert blossoming as the rose — Victoria no longer wan and drooping, no longer dejected and cast down upon the earth, but risen like a Phoenix from its ashes, exulting in the fulness of strength, and pressing on in her mission, her brow radiant with hope, and her future bright with promise — she sees this the youngest born of the colonies taking her place as the brightest pearl in England's



E.T. Coleman, "Putting Through". From *Harper's Magazine*, November 1869.

Provincial Archives, Victoria

diadem — the Paradise of the Pacific — the Queen of the West.

And Reason, Faith whisper, "Arise! no longer give way to vain regrets, be up and doing; Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for the night cometh wherein no man can work". That as the chill and gloom of winter pass away, and with returning spring nature bursts into life, so should we wake up to a new life, to a second spring. That as yonder Mirage fades away, and objects are revealed in their true proportions, we should no longer be the sport of visionary projects, and buoyed up by cruel hopes, but pursue realities instead of phantoms. That as yonder Beacon shines on the darkest night to guide the storm-tossed mariner to a haven of refuge, so amidst the clouds of adversity the unerring light of Truth should point out the path we ought to read, and shed a lustre on our way: — that our aims should be lofty as those mountains, our resolves steadfast as those hills, our desires pure as those snows, so that our daily life may be encompassed with wisdom and beauty, harmony and peace, and that amidst these flowers that cover the earth, our thoughts may be lifted to the land where flowers forever bloom. ♦

John Hayman teaches English at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia.

1757

Year of Failure and Tragedy

—

By Boyce Richardson

History does not usually accord a great deal of attention to losers or failures, so it is not surprising that though our history books overflow with detail about the glories of the British conquest of Louisbourg in 1758, they are relatively silent about the fiasco of the failed blockade of Louisbourg the year before. And so far as I have been able to discover, they pay no attention at all to the extraordinary circumstances of the return to France in October of that year of the disease-ridden French fleet under the command of De La Motte.

The British mounted a huge operation against Louisbourg that year, but De La Motte, with a little help from Nature, foiled them. It is cruelly ironic that Nature should then have turned on him so viciously by ravaging his fleet with a disastrous epidemic during what was surely one of the most miserable voyages ever undertaken from the shores of Canada. Hundreds died on this voyage back to France in October: it must have been an almost unimaginable horror. Six months later, when James Wolfe arrived in Halifax — seasick and grumbling — he remarked that he had just been on the most extraordinary voyage since the days of Columbus. In comparison with what the French had experienced only a few months before, one begs leave to doubt it.

All of the events of that year of failure, however, throw a fascinating light on those times. The British failure was the result of indecision. The problem was that William Pitt, who came back into office in December, 1756, did not really get a grip on things

until a new ministry was formed in June, 1757 — too late to turn things around that year.

Edward Boscawen was the naval star of the time, but in 1757 he was needed in Europe, and when Pitt decided to become aggressive in Canada, a lesser admiral, Francis Holburne, was put in command of a great fleet which gathered at Cork, in Ireland, along with thousands of soldiers who were to be carried across the Atlantic. In Halifax they were to be joined by thousands more from the North American armies under the command of the Earl of Loudoun. The two armies were supposed to converge and descend on Louisbourg like a mighty host — but they both arrived late.

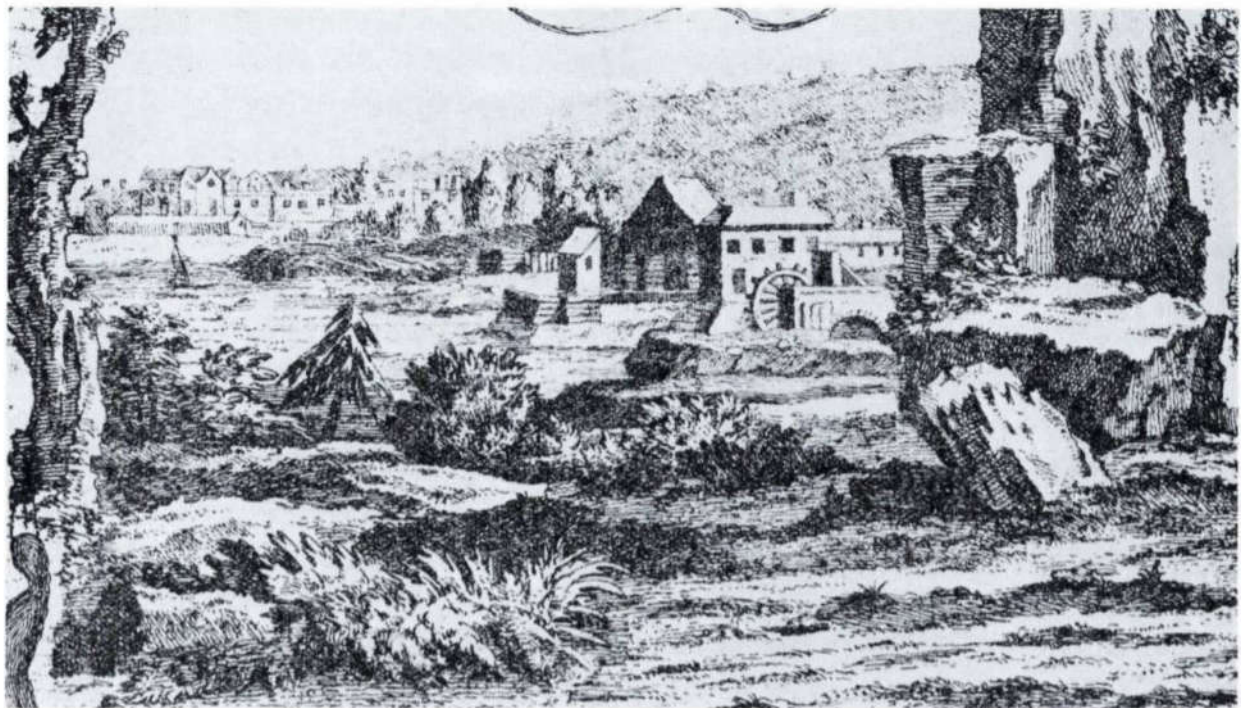
THE ARMIES ARE TOO LATE

Holburne was not able to get away from Cork until 7 May, when he should have already been in Halifax. These few weeks of delay put the British at a disadvantage from which they never recovered throughout the summer. De La Motte managed to arrive in Louisbourg from Brest on 19 June, a good three weeks before Holburne limped into Halifax, his fleet widely dispersed by severe Atlantic storms.

We have interesting accounts of these two voyages from Europe, especially of the English one, for one of the 5,200 soldiers who sailed from Cork was Capt. John

*James, Earl of Loudoun
from a mezzotint by Sir Joshua Reynolds.*





View of Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1750. Opposite page: Major Robert Roger.

Knox, a soldier of little distinction who has made his mark in history through his *Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America* — now regarded as the best record we have of those momentous times. Knox tells how the fleet was separated by “a dreadful storm” on 20 May, but the commander of his transport wasted time running northwards in the hope of picking up an enemy prize. He gave chase to a few ships but did not catch them, and the greatest excitement came from viewing “the great number of whales, grampusses and porpusses,” and “several mountainous islands of ice”, which Knox said he did not believe he would ever have tired of viewing.

Off the banks of Newfoundland they were told by a New England fisherman that some French men-of-war had arrived in Louisbourg by the first week of May.

THE JAIL DISTEMPER TAKES A HAND

Both fleets were weakened by disease, almost certainly the “Jail Distemper”, as it was then called, or typhus, which usually infected the fleet when, as often happened, the dregs of humanity from the jails and slums were rounded up by the press gangs. In a letter to his superiors from Halifax, Holburne wrote that when he arrived on the coast his fleet was in no condition to begin a blockade of Louisbourg, “being very sickley and in want of water”.

A thick fog delayed them outside Halifax harbor for five days, even though 12 vessels were sent out to look for them, with pilots to guide them into port.

“From being as Healthy as most that ever sailed from England, We had between Nine Hundred and a Thousand Men put ashore to the Hospital, Five Hundred of which will be left behind Sick, besides Two Hundred Dead, since We first sailed.” The acceptance of health disaster was almost laconic.

The French commander also had his health problems (though in May and June they were as nothing compared with what they were to be six months later). Emmanuel-Auguste de Cahideuc, Comte Dubois de la Motte, was already an old man who had been jousting at sea with the British for more than a half century. Only two years before, he had managed on the homeward journey to outwit a British fleet by sailing all his ships through the Strait of Belle Isle, something a French fleet had never done before.

But before De La Motte sailed from Brest this year, Fate dealt him a loaded hand: his fleet was joined by two ships that had taken on some men from the hospital at Rochefort, and from these invalids the fever spread so that even before leaving Brest he had to send 400 sick men ashore to the hospitals. Even so, on the way over the Atlantic these two ships had many men die and many others fall ill. After their arrival in Louisbourg, the fleet had so many sick seamen that they had to set up tent-hospitals, and since these were placed too close to the tents of healthy servicemen, the infection began



to spread throughout Louisbourg until it "became general", in the words of the British naval doctor, James Lind.

A STRIKE FORCE GATHERS — AND WAITS

Over on the other side, John Knox (never a man to criticize his superiors), found no fault with the late arrival of Holburne's fleet, but recorded that when they went ashore to present their compliments, the Earl of Loudoun, Commander-in-Chief in America, who himself had arrived only eight days before from New York, remarked that "we staid so long he had almost despaired of us; but being assured our delay proceeded principally from an obstinate set of contrary winds, that had retarded us in Ireland above two months after our arrival at the port of embarkation, His Lordship seems pleased." By the time everyone had arrived Loudoun had almost 12,000 men under arms, with at least 7,000 sailors manning the fleet. The intention was to attack Louisbourg as soon as possible.

Joseph Gorham, who had been a member of his brother John's infamous Rangers in the 1749 attack on Louisbourg, was sent out in a small captured French vessel to take a look at the French stronghold, and reported seeing 10 or 12 small ships. Holburne then sent Captain John Rous out to get a more accurate report, but "the Weather was so Thick Capt. Rous told me that He could not look into the Harbour the whole Time He was out." However, he confirmed by talking to fishermen that the French were by now present in Louisbourg in great strength, the fleet from Brest having been reinforced by some ships from Toulon and from Hispaniola in the West Indies.

Loudoun has often been harshly judged by the historians and it seems that his men were not overly fond of him either. Knox would never allow himself to say anything directly, but he records the curious circumstance that when Loudoun was reviewing his troops a ball was discharged that wounded one of his orderly sergeants in the arm. "But upon the strictest scrutiny, it appeared to be an accident," he remarked laconically, adding: "It is however remarkable that an affair of the same kind happened before, though not in this camp, as His Excellency was reviewing another battalion of this corps, by which a Lieutenant was killed who stood very near to His Lordship."

Loudoun exercised his troops and set them to planting gardens to grow vegetables that would be needed when the general hospital was set up to receive the sick and wounded from the forthcoming attack. The impact of these thousands of visitors on the small village of Halifax may be imagined. With Holburne's arrival the little town of 1,500 souls had to deal with 1,000 sick

seamen and soldiers, who were put into the houses that still served as hospitals. Rum was sold so freely and with such devastating effect that on 16 July the provincial council authorized the provost-major to enter any unlicensed house where drinking was evident to seize all liquor and store it in the king's storehouses until the departure of the military. Even so it was said that "debauchery and pestilence were out of hand in the town". (The following year, in very similar circumstances, Admiral Boscawen complained to Amherst, that the women who accompanied the army were "notorious suttlers", and said that he did not see a sober soldier in Halifax. He believed that on the attack on Louisbourg that year, only 300 of 2,000 seamen in half a dozen ships under his command were not drunk on the job.)

Defence was needed against Indian attacks, and a group of Rangers from New York, under Capt. Robert Rogers, "marched out every day to scour the country," wrote Knox. "These light troops have at present no particular uniform, only they wear their cloaths short, and are armed with a firelock, tomahock, or small hatchet, and a scalping knife; a bullock's horn full of powder hangs under their right arm, by a belt from the left shoulder; and a leathern, or seal's skin bag, buckled round their waist, which hangs down before, contains bullets, and a smaller shot, of the size of full-grown peas: six or seven of which, with a ball, they generally load". Simple country boys.

STRANGE BEHAVIOR OF HIS LORDSHIP

The weather was extremely variable: violent rains, thunder and lightning, windy, with thick fogs, one week; then "exceedingly hot" the next. Two men were executed for desertion. Loudoun's vegetable plots now gained their small place in history through the behavior of Major-General Lord Charles Hay, commander of one of the four brigades for the attack on Louisbourg who along the way began to come over rather strange. He was a member of the Council of War, but Loudoun reported to his commander-in-chief in London, "Lord Charles Hay took a very odd turn, and behaved indecently to almost every Member in the Council; Seldom Sett at the Table but got to the Window, laid up his legs in it and looked out, except in the course of Examining People any thing happened to hit his Fancy, then he Asked odd Questions, Grinning and Laughing, and using all the Gestures of a Man out of His Senses."

Lord Charles took to galloping through the camp, every now and then stopping and collecting crowds around him, denouncing the mock attacks that were being held in preparation for the siege. He accused Loudoun of expending the nation's wealth in planting cabbages when he ought to have been fighting. Loudoun



Halifax, 1757. from a watercolour by Thomas Davis. This view shows a squadron setting off for Louisbourg.

contrived to have the Council of War meet without Hay, who was considered by his fellow officers to have gone mad, and was closely confined for seven months. (Hay was ordered home, but no ship would take him, and in desperation he volunteered the following spring to go aboard one of the ships which arrived for the 1758 siege, and he witnessed that from the decks of *HMS Dublin*. Back in England he demanded and was given a court-martial. He was charged with inciting mutiny and sedition among the troops; but he died in 1760 before the King took any decision in his case.)

LITTLE PROSPECT OF SUCCESS

Holburne wanted to take his fleet out to blockade Louisbourg, but the generals would not agree to it. In spite of the rather formidable French forces, Loudoun embarked his army into transports on 2 August, but Holburne in a letter to the Admiralty recorded:

I intend proceeding with them . . . when the Wind and Weather will permit, and give them all the Aid and Assistance in my Power, but there is not the least prospect of being able to force the Harbour, if I had double the Number of Ships. It would have been very happy if we had been off there in the Month of May, as we should have had a chance of intercepting the different squadrons of the Enemy . . .

We are all laying ready, but the Winds are from the Sea every day, and very thick with Fogs, till there is an Alteration of Weather, there is no possibility of moving with the Fleet.

At the last minute the commanders changed their minds. On 3 August, with the whole army waiting in ships to take off, word arrived from the Newfoundland squadron that a French schooner had been captured that had just left Louisbourg for France. According to Knox, the French sailors had pretended to throw something overboard, but when the ship was searched a small bag was found under a packet of dry fish, containing

letters to the French ministry detailing the armaments of Louisbourg, including 22 ships of the line, and 7,000 men in "good spirits, and provided with every thing necessary for a good defence."

Loudoun immediately cancelled the attack. "The expedition is laid aside," commented Knox, "and all further design of acting offensively to the eastward for this campaign is given up." He rejected insinuations made "by some malevolent spirits" that the British commanders had fallen for a French trick, what we would now call "a disinformation ploy".

Two regiments disembarked, and three stayed on the ships ready to take off for elsewhere. The weather continued bad, and they hung around for several days. "Our transports are now much crowded . . ." remarked Knox, "there not being sufficient births for the number of men on board." They left finally two weeks after they had been embarked on the ships — Loudoun south to New York, Holburne to blockade Louisbourg from the sea, and the rest to the Bay of Fundy. Holburne returned to Halifax ten days later, and Sir Charles Hardy advised Loudoun by letter that he was able to confirm the strength of the Louisbourg garrison, which, he said, "Must have ended with the Ruin of your Army, if a Landing had been Attempted."

Holburne sailed back north in mid-September and established his ships outside the harbor, but the French, in spite of their apparent strength, showed no disposition to sally out on the attack, and the reason for this is almost certainly because "the French crews were very sickly."

KNOCKOUT BY NATURE

Though Fate was preparing a terrible blow to the French, it first delivered a knockout punch to the English. On the evening of 24 September, Holburne's fleet off Louisbourg was caught in an easterly gale, which, veering round to the southward, became "a perfect storm", as Knox remarked. "It continued violent all that night, and the greatest part of the forenoon following," and when it was over the British fleet was in ruins. (By this time Knox was in the Bay of Fundy, but he heard about the storm through dispatches.)

Holburne's flagship, the *Newark*, had to throw eight guns overboard and scuttle for Halifax. Ten of his other ships were dismasted. The *Tilbury* was driven ashore southeast of Louisbourg, and only 175 of the 400 men aboard were saved by the French, who sent them soon after, under flag of truce, to Halifax. If the French had been capable of attacking, they could now have demolished the helpless British fleet, but for almost a month De La Motte stayed in port, preparing for the return to Brest.

AN UNUSUAL MEDICAL HERO

The dramatic story of the French voyage home has been overlooked by most historians. But it is told in an obscure but fascinating work written in 1779 by Dr. James Lind, called *An Essay on the Most Effectual Means of Preserving the Health of Seamen*. Dr. Lind is one of the unsung heroes of history. As a sea-going naval

A view of Halifax, with ships.



Royal Ontario Museum



His Majesty's

DECLARATION

Of WAR against the *French King*.

GEORGE R.



HE unwarrantable Proceedings of the *French* in the *West Indies*, and *North America*, since the Conclusion of the Treaty of *Amity*, and the Violations and Encroachments made by them upon Our Territories, and the Settlements of Our Subjects in those Parts, particularly in Our Province of *New Scotland*, have been so notorious, and so frequent, that they cannot but be looked upon as a sufficient Evidence of a formed Design and Resolution in that Court, to pursue invariably such Measures, as should most effectually promote their ambitious Views, without any Regard to the most solemn Treaties and Engagements. We have not been wanting on Our Part, to make, from time to time, the most serious Representations to the *French King*, upon these repeated Acts of Violence, and to endeavour to obtain Redress and Satisfaction for the Injuries done to Our Subjects, and to prevent the like Causes of Complaint for the future: But though frequent Assurances have been given, that every thing should be ruled agreeable to the Treaties subsisting between the Two Crowns, and particularly that the Evacuation of the Four Neutral Islands in the *West Indies* should be effected (which was expressly promised to Our Ambassador in *France*) the Execution of these Assurances, and of the Treaties on which they were founded, has been evaded under the most frivolous Pretences, and the unjustifiable Practices of the *French Government*, and of the Officers acting under their Authority, were still carried on, till, at length, in the Month of *April* One thousand seven hundred and fifty four, they broke out in open Acts of Hostility, when, in Time of profound Peace, without any Declaration of War, and without any previous Notice given, or Application made, a Body of *French Troops* under the Command of an Officer bearing the *French King's* Commission, attacked in a hostile Manner, and possessed themselves of the *English Fort* on the *Ohio* in *North America*.

But notwithstanding this Act of Hostility, which could not but be looked upon as a Commencement of War, yet, from Our earnest Desire of Peace, and in Hopes the Court of *France* would desist from this Violence and Injustice, We contented Ourselves with sending such a Force to *America*, as was indispensably necessary for the immediate Defence and Protection of Our Subjects against fresh Attacks and Insults.

In the mean Time great Naval Armaments were preparing in the Ports of *France*, and a considerable Body of *French Troops* embarked for *North America*; and though the *French Ambassador* was sent back to *England* with specious Professions of a Desire to accommodate these Differences, yet it appeared, that their real Design was only to gain Time for the Passage of those Troops to *America*, which they hoped would secure the Superiority of the *French Forces* in those Parts, and enable them to carry their ambitious and oppressive Projects into Execution.

In these Circumstances We could not but think it incumbent upon Us, to endeavour to prevent the Success of so dangerous a Design, and to oppose the Landing of the *French Troops* in *America*; and in Consequence of the just and necessary Measures We had taken for that Purpose, the *French Ambassador* was immediately recalled from Our Court, the Fortifications at *Dunkirk*, which had been repairing for some Time, were enlarged; great Bodies of Troops marched down to the Coast; and Our Kingdoms were threatened with an Invasion.

In order to prevent the Execution of these Designs, and to provide for the Security of Our Kingdoms, which were thus threatened, We could no longer forbear giving Orders for the seizing at Sea the Ships of the *French King*, and his Subjects. Notwithstanding which, as We were still unwilling to give up all Hopes that an Accommodation might be effected, We have contented Ourselves hitherto with detaining the said Ships, and preserving them, and (as far as was possible) their Cargoes entire, without proceeding to the Confiscation of them; but it being now evident, by the hostile Invasion actually made by the *French King* of Our Island of *Monrovia*, that it is the determined Resolution of that Court to hearken to no Terms of Peace, but to carry on the War, which has been long begun on their Part, with the utmost Violence, We can no longer remain, consistently with what We owe to Our own Honour, and to the Welfare of Our Subjects, within those Bounds, which, from a Desire of Peace, We had hitherto observed.

We have therefore thought proper to declare War, and We do hereby Declare War against the *French King*, who hath so unjustly begun it, relying on the Help of Almighty God, in Our just Undertaking, and being assured of the hearty Concurrence and Assistance of Our Subjects, in Support of so good a Cause; hereby willing and requiring Our Captain General of Our Forces, Our Commissioners for executing the Office of Our High Admiral of Great Britain, Our Lieutenants of Our several Counties, Governors of Our Forts and Garrisons, and all other Officers and Soldiers under them, by Sea and Land, to do and execute all Acts of Hostility, in the Prosecution of this War against the *French King*, his Vassals and Subjects, and to oppose their Attempts: Willing and requiring all Our Subjects to take Notice of the same; whom We henceforth strictly forbid to hold any Correspondence or Communication with the said *French King*, or his Subjects. And We do hereby command Our own Subjects, and advise all other Persons, of what Nation soever, not to transport or carry any Soldiers, Arms, Powder, Ammunition, or other Contraband Goods, to any of the Territories, Lands, Plantations, or Countries of the said *French King*, Declaring, That whatsoever Ship or Vessel shall be met withal, transporting or carrying any Soldiers, Arms, Powder, Ammunition, or any other Contraband Goods, to any of the Territories, Lands, Plantations, or Countries of the said *French King*, the same, being taken, shall be condemned as good and lawful Prize.

And whereas there are remaining in Our Kingdom, divers of the Subjects of the *French King*, We do hereby declare Our Royal Intention to be, That all the *French Subjects* who shall demean themselves dutifully towards Us, shall be safe in their Persons and Effects.

Given at Our Court at *Kennington*, the Seventeenth Day of *May*, 1756, in the Twenty ninth Year of Our Reign.

God save the King.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *Thomas Baskett*, Printer to the King's most Excellent Majesty; and by the Assigns of *Robert Baskett*. 1756.



Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Town and Harbour of Halifax as it appears from Dartmouth. Dominique Serres, oil on canvas.

surgeon for many years, he discovered by controlled experiment in 1753 that oranges and lemons were the best cure for scurvy, which had been the curse of the sea ever since long voyages began. Because a naval surgeon was the lowest rung of the medical profession, Lind's opinion was paid scant heed by his contemporaries, and it was more than 40 years before his cure was adopted by the navy (with spectacular results).

Almost everything known about health conditions during the Seven Years' War comes from Dr. Lind's observations. "The number of seamen . . . who died by shipwreck, capture, famine, fire or sword are but inconsiderable in respect of such as are destroyed by the ship diseases and the usual maladies of intemperate climates," Dr. Lind wrote. And he was right: during that war, 133,708 men were lost to the service by disease or desertion, compared with 1,512 killed in action.

According to Hans Zinsser, in his fascinating (and amusing) biography of the body-louse, *Rats, Lice and History*, typhus had been devastating European armies since at least the fifteenth century; it killed hundreds of thousands of people in Mexico with the arrival of the Spaniards; it overran Europe in the seventeenth century, and became so lively later that he described the eight-

eenth as the Century of Typhus, during which it was carried to the remotest parts of the earth. We have known only since 1909 that this disease is transmitted by body-lice, which were first carried by the rats that followed exploration around the world, and then simply spread from man to man. "Typhus fever was born when the first infected rat flea fed upon a man," says Zinsser.

Lind, of course, was puzzled by the provenance of the disease. In his day most diseases were ascribed to bad air, fogs, vapours, humidity or poisonous exhalations, but he could not quite believe it. The jails were undoubtedly the source of infection for the ships of the fleets, but it was also frequent in parish poorhouses, and he had also observed it among English felons in transport ships, and Dutch soldiers going to Batavia.

"It does not seem to originate in air," he wrote. And the nearest he could come to it was that there is in all infected places, adhering to certain substances, "an envenomed nidus, or source of effluvia," and that the air, especially if it is confined, becomes more or less strongly impregnated. In other words, the infections, though they did not "reside in air" were occasionally sent into the air from the substances in which they did reside. High among these substances he put dirty cloth-



A View of the Town and Harbour of Louisbourg by Richard Paton.

ing. He recommended a uniform for sailors. But it was a century before his idea was adopted. "The province has been mine to deliver precepts; the power is in others to execute," Lind remarked, a trifle sadly.

THE LOUSE GOES TO WORK WITH A WILL

Before they sailed home from Louisbourg on 20 October, 1757, the French were still battling with the fever they had brought over with them from Rochefort hospital. They buried many of their men, decided to leave 400 behind who were dying, and in what was evidently a gamble with Nature, took along with them 1,000 invalids they hoped could still recover. The British were in no state to stop them from leaving port, but the louse went to work with a will: within six days most of the 1,000 invalids were dead, and many others had fallen ill. The symptoms, as described by Lind, are "a low fever attended with a violent thirst and heat in the skin, often with chills at the beginning, and always with a disorder in the head, which may rise to a delirium or stupor." The image is nightmarish: an entire naval force of fevered and delirious men, dying by the hour, their corpses dealt with by colleagues terrified that they would be next.

According to Lind, before it arrived at Brest on 22 November, the French fleet was entirely disabled, because it did not have enough healthy seamen left to work the ships, much less to help the sick. By this time 4,000 were ill, and the holds, the decks, every part of every ship was crowded with the sick. All the surgeons and almoners were dead or sick. In this dreadful condition, a fleet which had saved Louisbourg from attack limped to the French coast. They would have been easy pickings now, if the British Navy had been around.

SIX TERRIBLE MONTHS IN BREST

Seamen were sent from other ships to bring the fleet to anchor — this must have been a fearful assignment for any man — but the marine hospital in Brest was already crowded, for only a few days before two ships, the *Bizarre* and *Celebre*, had arrived from Quebec, and had sent 1,000 sick men to the hospital. There was nowhere for the 4,000 new invalids to go, and for a few days, Lind says, they were "promiscuously crowded together into every place they could gain admission, where death hourly thinned their numbers."

Eventually 15 hospitals were set up, and physicians and surgeons arrived "from all parts" to lend a hand.



A plan of Louisbourg.

Royal Ontario Museum

But even these were inadequate, and "the mortality from thence prodigious." Lind quotes the work of a French doctor on the state of these hospitals. They were so overcrowded it was impossible to keep them clean, and the stench became so intolerable that no healthy person could enter the hospitals without being seized with a headache. Any indisposition quickly became fatal. In "an air so highly contaminated", the slightest infection attained the utmost degree of virulence, and even those who survived a first attack of fever were sure to suffer a relapse. Confinement in these hospitals, in fact, was "almost certain death", and, Lind says, "such as had no fever when sent thither, soon served, equally with the infected, as additional fuel to the devouring flame."

The disease soon spread to the attendants. Five physicians, 150 surgeons, 200 almoners and nurses, and many slaves ("who, by a promise of their liberty, were engaged to assist the sick") fell victim.

But this was just the beginning. From the attendants, the disease spread to "the lower class of people" in the town, and soon whole houses were filled with the dead and dying. Though doctors, food and medicine were promised free of charge to everyone, in many houses it was discovered no one was left who was capable of calling a physician, and in some houses dead bodies remained undiscovered for several days.

"The disease afterwards began to appear in some parts of the neighboring provinces, being carried thither by people who fled from Brest," records Dr. Lind. "But . . . in March the fever began to abate, and in April it entirely ceased, having carried off, in less than five months, upwards of 10,000 people in the hospitals alone, besides a great number who died in the city of Brest." So it appears that almost the entire 1757 garrison of Louisbourg perished in the epidemic.

So ended a year of indecisive battle for the control of Canada — in an appalling tragedy that history has treated as a trifle.

By the following year Pitt (himself still only 50) was in total command of the British forces, and he swept Loudoun and other aristocrats aside, replacing them with young career officers such as Jeffrey Amherst, 41, James Wolfe, 31, and in the Navy, Edward Boscawen, 47.

THE COMMANDERS SURVIVE

Holburne paid the penalty for not getting to Halifax in time. When he returned to Britain he was named Port-Admiral of Portsmouth, but took no part in the coming triumphs against the French. In 1761 he struck his flag and quitted his command, was eventually given the civil rank of Rear-Admiral, and ended his days as Governor of Greenwich Hospital.

De La Motte's naval career of more than 50 years ended with his arrival in Brest. He remained a combative old gentleman, however, and the following year, when the British landed near St. Malo, he went there, despite his 75 years, and helped repulse the enemy.

The commanders of 1757, therefore, did not go out in a blaze of glory: but at least they lived to old age — De La Motte died at 81, Loudoun at 77, Holburne at 67 — having never, presumably, been exposed to the lice-ridden quarters occupied by the poor men who served under them.

◆

Boyce Richardson is an Ottawa-based journalist and film-maker.

Flood Warnings

In 1826 and 1852 the Red River Settlement
Faced Severe Perils by Water

—
BY J.M. BUMSTED

Despite the obvious attractions and advantages of the Red River Valley for European settlement within the vast territories loosely administered by the Hudson's Bay Company, the area had one drawback which was even more unpredictable and potentially more catastrophic than its climate. It had an enormously high potential for serious spring-time flooding. While there were undoubtedly recurrent floods during its habitation by native peoples before the arrival of the white man in substantial numbers — the flood of 1776 was apparently of vast proportions and part of the oral tradition of the region — not until a permanent colony of whites and mixed bloods settled on the banks of the Red in the early years of the nineteenth century did the flooding of the Valley become one of the natural hazards of life in the colony which Lord Selkirk had founded. Indeed, because of the unpredictable irregularity of the occurrence, a major flood became automatically a disaster of substantial proportions.

Although Selkirk and its other early proponents did not fully recognize the fact, the Red River Valley had under certain conditions a high natural potential for flooding, and the colony was devastated by raging waters in 1826 and 1852, escaping by a hair's breadth in 1861, the last year before 1950 in which the whole area of what is now Winnipeg was completely under water. Although there were years of high water and minor flooding after 1862, including 1882, 1904, and 1948, that the Red behaved badly so infrequently and had not acted up disastrously for nearly a century helps account for the lack of preparation for the 1950 catastrophe. Nevertheless, the potential risk was always present, and had certainly affected the residents of the region in 1826 and 1852, nearly wiping out permanent settlement on at least the former occasion.

The Red River Valley serves as the drainage basin for an area of 111,000 square miles, with nearly 50,000 of those square miles drained directly by the Red River and 62,500 by the Assiniboine River, which in turn drains into the Red. The drainage, of course, flows north, thus presenting the possibility that waters from the south will reach ice blockages at any point up to and including their ultimate destination in Hudson Bay. Furthermore, the land crossed by the Red River, particularly from Lake Traverse in what is now South Dakota to Lake Winnipeg, constitutes an ancient glacial lake upon which the river and its tributaries have been unable to carve natural channels wide and deep enough to accommodate the volumes of water at flood periods.

That major flooding has not been more common, given the topographical situation, can be explained largely in terms of the climatological conditions of the Basin. Most rainfall normally falls in the summer, and the winter months are typically the driest. In most years, normal weather patterns have moderated the flood potential. The weather factors which have produced serious flood hazards are many. Several years of unusually heavy rainfall which saturates the ground are a usual precondition. Then comes a cold winter with a late snowfall, permitting the ice to become abnormally thick on rivers and lakes. Follow this situation with a heavy snowfall late in the winter, add a cold spring which allows little gradual melt and a sudden late thaw (often accompanied by heavy rains brought by warm winds from the south), and the ingredients for a sudden rush of water which overflows the banks of the rivers are complete. Given the relative flatness of the ground, water spreads rapidly and there are few points of higher elevation which remain unaffected. Once the banks fail to contain the water, the

population is at the mercy of the elements.

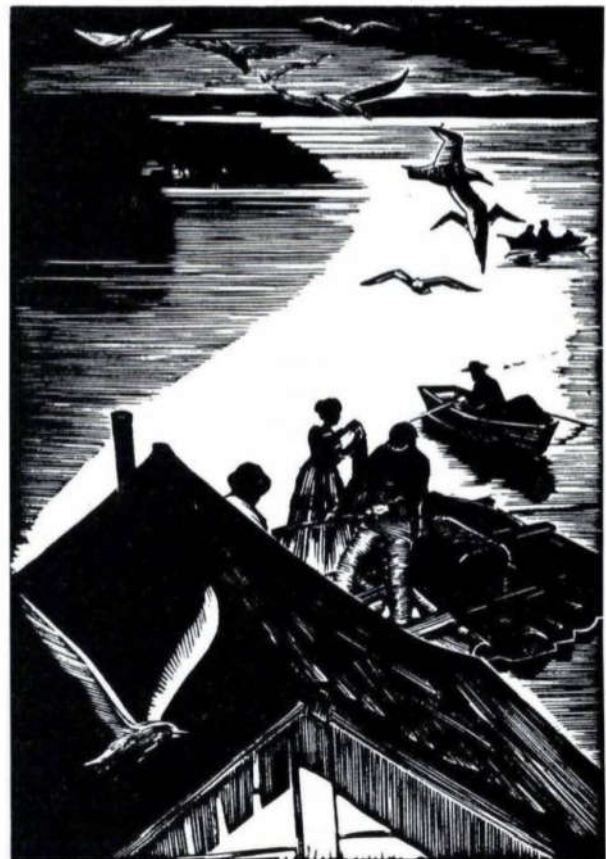
The first devastating flood in the post-settlement Red River basin came in 1826, occurring as the culmination of a series of manmade and natural disasters which had plagued Lord Selkirk's colony since its establishment in 1812. The fur trade war between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company had resulted in the virtual destruction of the infant colony in 1815 by *bois-brûlés* and the subsequent bloody incident at Seven Oaks in 1816. Lord Selkirk himself visited his Red River settlement in 1817 and supervised the orderly restoration of his Highland settlers and the settlement of the discharged mercenaries, mainly Swiss from the De Meuron regiment he had brought west with him in 1816. In 1818 and 1819 the crops were overrun by locusts, and not until 1820, the year of Selkirk's death in France, was a normal harvest possible. The merger in 1821 of the two warring fur trading companies, made possible by the exhaustion of both sides and the convenient demise of Selkirk, whose offended sense of honour made compromise difficult if not impossible, signalled a new era for the settlement.

Even before the formal union of the companies, there had begun the process of the drifting of population to the banks of the Red and the Assiniboine, as *métis* freemen, retired European fur traders and their mixed blood families, and an occasional French Canadian, joined the Highland Scots initially recruited by Selkirk. Roman Catholic missionaries had arrived in 1818, an Anglican missionary in 1820, and churches and schools were begun. By 1821 there were 221 Scots, 65 De Meurons, and 133 Canadians (French-speaking) scattered around the banks of the forks of the Red and Assiniboine, with 500 *métis* concentrated around Pembina. After Selkirk's death, his colony, administratively separate from the fur-trade company, was supervised by executors on behalf of the Earl's minor son. The chief trustee was Andrew Colvile, Selkirk's brother-in-law and long-time business partner, who also dominated the management of the Hudson's Bay Company. George Simpson was Colvile's man in Western Canada, and Simpson came increasingly in the 1820s to run the colony and the fur trade in tandem, as integrated rather than separate entities. He quickly recognized that many of the redundant employees of the newly amalgamated trading rivals would have no place to go without abandoning their native families, and he encouraged those people he "retired" as part of the rationalization of manpower to accept land in the colony. Simpson also appreciated that the freemen must be controlled, and through Cuthbert Grant the process was begun of attracting the *métis* north of the 49th parallel and into some form of semi-sedentary existence on the river lots originally laid out by Selkirk. Swiss settlers, recruited as part of the Earl's attempt

to increase population and arriving in 1821 after his death, had proved a considerable problem. They were for the most part not experienced farmers, and they complained a good deal (often with justification) about conditions and treatment, particularly when the Selkirk estate cut back on credit and ceased assistance to the newcomers. Both to save money and to reduce problems of adjustment to western conditions, Simpson recommended to the Selkirk Estate that recruitment of European immigrants virtually cease; the colony was to be peopled from the West itself, not from abroad. This policy was in a sense finalized by the flood of 1826.

Years of tribulation appeared to be melting away in 1825. John Pritchard could boast of "a line of well built houses" from the White Horse Plain to Netley Creek, "an abundance of domestic cattle," and "a prospect of wheat exceeding anything heretofore produced in this Country." But the winter of 1825-6 was an exceptionally hard one, providing most of the classic climatic conditions for a flood. It was, recalled Alexander Ross, "unusually severe, having begun earlier and continued later than usual. The snow averaged three feet deep and in the woods from four to five feet.

Flood on the Red, from a woodcut by W.J. Phillips.





This unfinished pencil sketch by Peter Rindisbacher is thought to be the only surviving picture of the great flood of 1826.

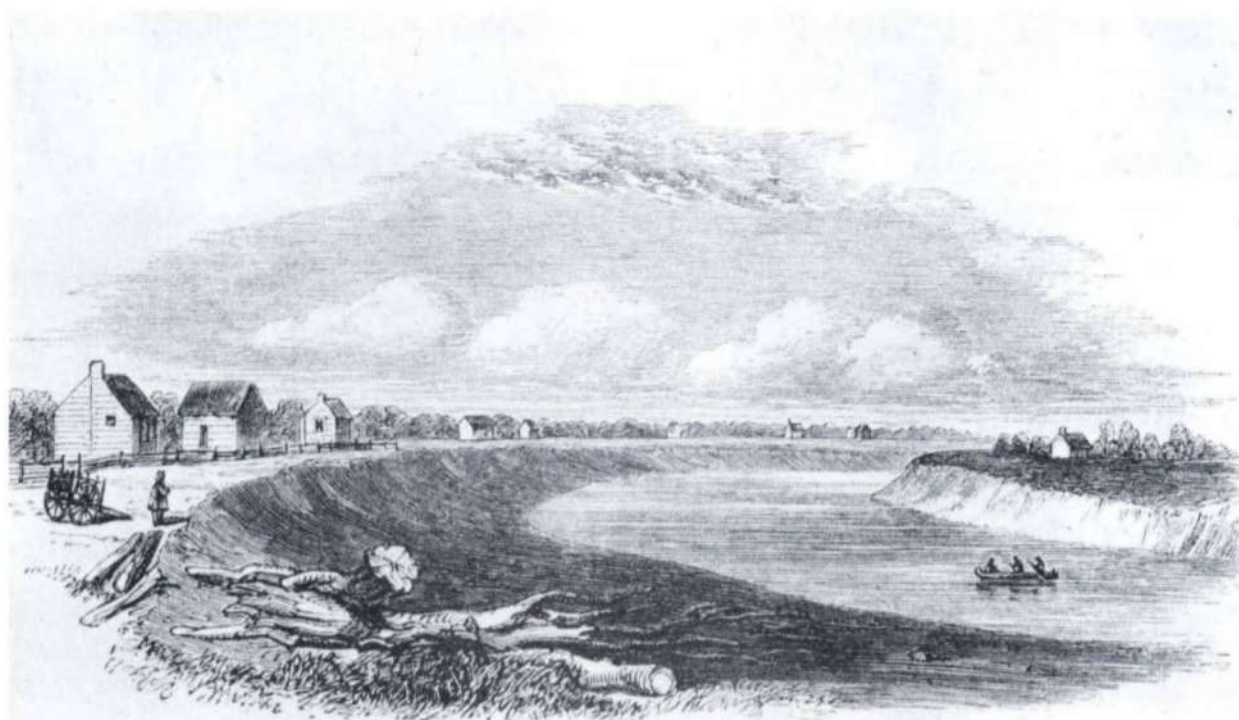
The cold was intense, being often 45° below zero; the ice measured five feet seven inches in thickness." September and October had been unusually rainy and by the end of October, according to Donald Gunn, "not only the rivers but even the great lakes assumed their winter covering." The great depths of snow, Gunn added, made hunting difficult, particularly on horseback, and a great December snow storm, "such as has rarely been seen in these parts," drove "the buffalo before it beyond the reach of the hunters and killed a great many of their horses." The result, reported Bishop Provencher, was a winter famine at the settlement which caused much suffering.

Despite the winter, the leaders of the colony were feeling extremely optimistic. Donald McKenzie, the Company's chief factor at Fort Garry, wrote to Andrew Colville on 6 February that the settlement was prosperous and tranquil. A new grain mill had finally been put into operation and 1,600 bushels of wheat were in store for Norway House. George Simpson was even more enthusiastic in a report entitled "Red River Colony" penned on 10 February. In it he argued that flax culture and livestock rearing were the most profitable aspects of agriculture for the settlement, and he projected a scheme for supplying livestock to the Company in which the profits "may in my humble opinion be made even to surpass the Fur Trade in value." Such enthusiasm was considerably dampened by the developments in the spring of 1826.

Thawing came suddenly at the end of April, ice jams

occurred, and rain fell heavily. By 3 May the water was overflowing the banks of the Red, and during the next twenty-four hours rose five feet at the Forks. The water was still held in restraint by the ice, which gave way suddenly about 2 p.m. on 5 May "with an awful rush, carrying away cattle, houses, trees and everything else that came in its way." Forty-seven dwelling houses were carried away in the first half hour, and others soon followed. Only at the last moment were perishable goods and property taken to higher ground, or placed in scaffolding in the trees along the banks. According to Francis Heron, clerk of the Company at Fort Garry and keeper of a journal which is our best source for the 1826 devastation, even before the valuables had been fully removed by the inhabitants "their houses and part of their furniture, were swept off before their eyes by the icy deluge. The havoc was terrible." On 7 May the ice in the Assiniboine broke up and the enormous, sudden discharge of water made the preservation of property virtually impossible. People were happy to have escaped with their lives. One eyewitness wrote that "the crashing of immense masses of ice was loud as thunder," and it is important to stress that the breakups produced sudden inundations rather than the gradual advance of water normally characteristic of Red River flooding.

The Company's boats were kept busy over the next few days "snatching" people from "watery graves," often off the roof tops of their houses. As the waters continued to rise and spread the settlers were forced



The Red River at Pierre Gladioux's.

Henry Youle Hind's 1850s sketch of the Red River not far from the Red River Settlement.

into constant retreat to higher ground. Most houses were wrecked and floated downstream, while the population huddled on a few pieces of higher ground far from their property. The heavy loss of buildings was in part attributable to their impermanent construction and in larger part to the rush of waters connected with the ice breakup in early May. Livestock was also particularly vulnerable and much was lost.

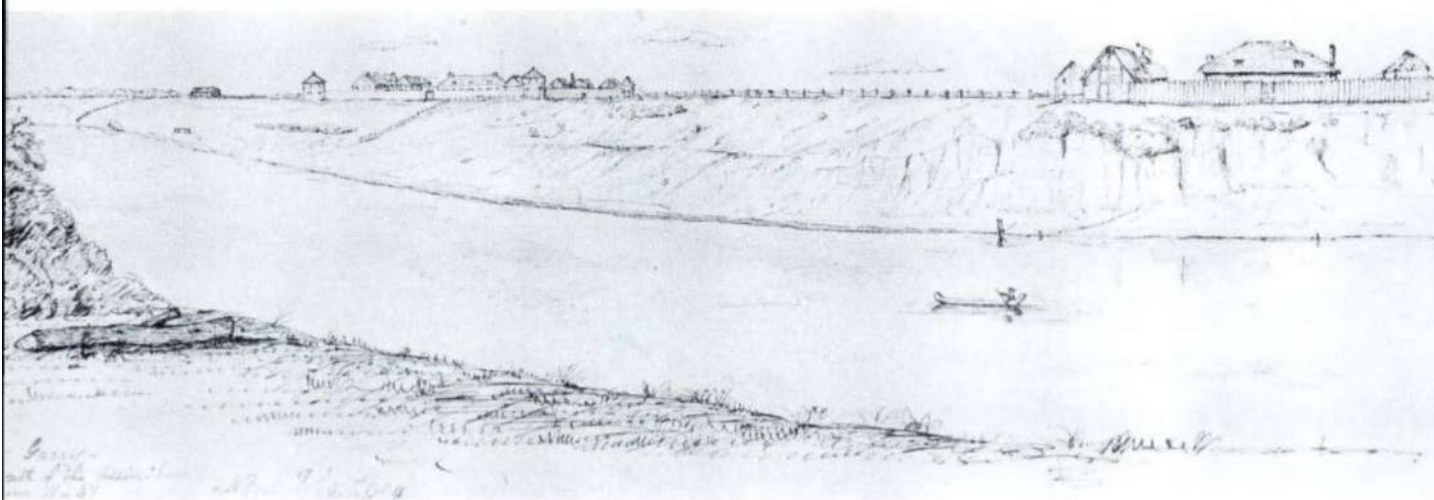
Not until 22 May did the waters crest, and took over a month to recede completely. Planting was begun in small quantities on new ground away from the river banks, and continued until early July, although damp ground made it impossible to plant the quantity of land cultivated in 1825. Loss of life had been surprisingly light in terms of the property devastation caused by waters which rose as much as forty feet above ice level, and which produced a lake seventeen miles wide extending from Pembina to Lake Winnipeg. One De Meuron settler was drowned on 21 May while questing his cattle, and a man and three children, apparently French mixed bloods, were killed when their canoe overturned. But the loss of property was extensive. Not only were houses, outbuildings and personal possessions destroyed, but the loss of livestock was

considerable, interrupting if not destroying the process of building breeding herds of sheep, cattle and horses accumulated at great expense from the United States over the preceding half dozen years. Curiously enough, as John Pritchard pointed out in a letter to England, "the three churches, the residence of the clergy and the house of our social prayer meeting, with the exception of the windmill," were "the only buildings which have not been carried away or so much injured as not to deserve notice."

On 14 June 1826 George Simpson wrote his first report on the colony's calamitous state to Andrew Colvile, writing,

... nothing short of ocular demonstration can give a correct idea of the present suffering state of its wretched inhabitants who have but Death staring them in the face whatever direction they look. All former reverses are scarcely worthy of notice compared with the present and this I consider an extinguisher to the hope of Red River ever retaining the name of a Settlement.

Simpson was not a man given to exaggeration, although his views on this occasion must be treated with some



View near "the forks" by George E. Finlay, 1847. The buildings at the right survived the 1826 flood.

caution. He found the colonists in the "greatest consternation and distress," but refused to advise them to remain, because they would demand assistance either as free gifts or upon credit. Always the bookkeeper, Simpson's pessimism was coloured by his fears of the expense of rebuilding. Not surprisingly, the Swiss and De Meuron settlers, always the most restive and discontented, decided to move south into the United States, and about 250 of them departed the colony with no opposition from Simpson, who had always regarded them as troublemakers anyway.

Despite Simpson's fears and the exodus of most of the Swiss and Germans, the settlement sprang back quickly. By 5 July Francis Heron noted "the people of the settlement employed enclosing their farms, and building new houses, with as much enthusiasm as if no misfortunes had ever befallen them." John Pritchard added in August that despite the departure of many inhabitants, "the old residents still remain and are actively employed in re-establishing things as heretofore; so that I expect next summer the remembrance of the flood alone will be retained." An exceptionally warm summer enabled crops not planted until July to flourish. By 21 August wheat and barley were in full ear and potatoes large enough for the table. Nevertheless, the flood had made its impact, particularly on Simpson and the least committed and most marginal of the European settlers. The loss of livestock was a heavy blow to many, and the exodus of the Swiss and Germans not only removed an entire ethnic component from Red River but also marked another step toward the emergence of the mixed bloods as the dominant demographic element of the community.

Over a generation would pass before the Red River Basin was again seriously affected by flooding conditions. The 1852 flood waters did not crest quite as

high or remain quite as long as in the 1826 inundation, and large sectors of the region, especially well below the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, were completely spared. At the same time, the colony was far better established and prosperous than in 1826, and property damage was more extensive while dislocation was felt far more acutely, particularly among the less prosperous elements of the population, who tended to cluster residentially in the areas hardest hit by the rising waters. The disaster of 1826 had affected everyone in the colony, while that of 1852 was far more selective.

Weather conditions had been building toward a major inundation for years. Summer and autumn rainfall had been heavy since 1848, and the rivers had overflowed their banks in 1850 and 1851. In 1852 a heavy March snowfall was followed by a cold April which delayed the breakup of the ice until the end of the month. Unlike 1826, however, the rise of water was more gradual, beginning on 25 April. There was a sudden rise of water level on 9-10 May, probably caused by the cresting of the Assiniboine, and the waters began receding around 20 May, allowing the fields in many places to dry by early June. For most inhabitants there was more than sufficient warning to remove valuables and livestock to higher ground, and while many buildings had their main floors covered with water, few were actually swept away. The major property damage in most areas, apart from houses which had to be dried and cleaned after having their floors covered with six to twelve inches of muddy slime, was to fencing and outbuildings. The loss of fencing was particularly severe, since it was difficult to keep livestock out of fields without it, and the shortage of timber made it expensive to replace. That fencing was a substantial item of damage distinguishes 1852 from 1826; in the

earlier flood there was little mention made of lost fences, indicating changing agricultural practices over the years. Some planting was delayed or prevented, but the settlement experienced only one death due to the flood, and while estimates of property damage ran as high as £25,000, the flood was but another natural disaster with which men coped.

Perhaps the most serious aspect of the 1852 flood was the differential way the damage was inflicted. The areas along the rivers which experienced the greatest flooding were those south of the forks along the Red or along the lower part of the Assiniboine. These areas were hit by the highest water and also by whatever surges of water were released by the breakup of the ice and the cresting of the rivers. Most buildings swept away rather than merely inundated were in these districts, which were inhabited by Canadians and métis and along the Assiniboine around Upper Fort Garry by the British pensioners who had come to the colony in 1848 and 1850. The Scots settlers in St. James and St. Andrew's districts were virtually unaffected, and were reported to have saved all their wheat on hand, up to a three-year reserve. Governor Eden Colville commented that "the more improvident Canadians and half breeds will have in great measure to trust to the

produce of the gun and the net," but he failed to add that chief among their improvidences was their choice of residential location along the less protected parts of the rivers. The pensioners were forced to evacuate their homes *en masse*, and were of course disheartened by the experience. Even among the pensioners, however, who resided in one of the most heavily flooded districts, only three houses were actually lost, although most dwellings required repair. Better construction was credited for the survival of the houses, and fortunately the pensioners' allotments were largely spared. Food prices were raised marginally by the flood, although the 1852 harvest was not a disaster. Seed wheat was distributed in 1853 to those who had no 1852 crop, and those without capital resources — those "improvident" mixed bloods — may have increased their reliance on hunting and fishing. But the 1852 flood, even more quickly than the 1826 one, receded into memory. Had the waters run as high for as long as in 1826, however, the story might have been quite different.

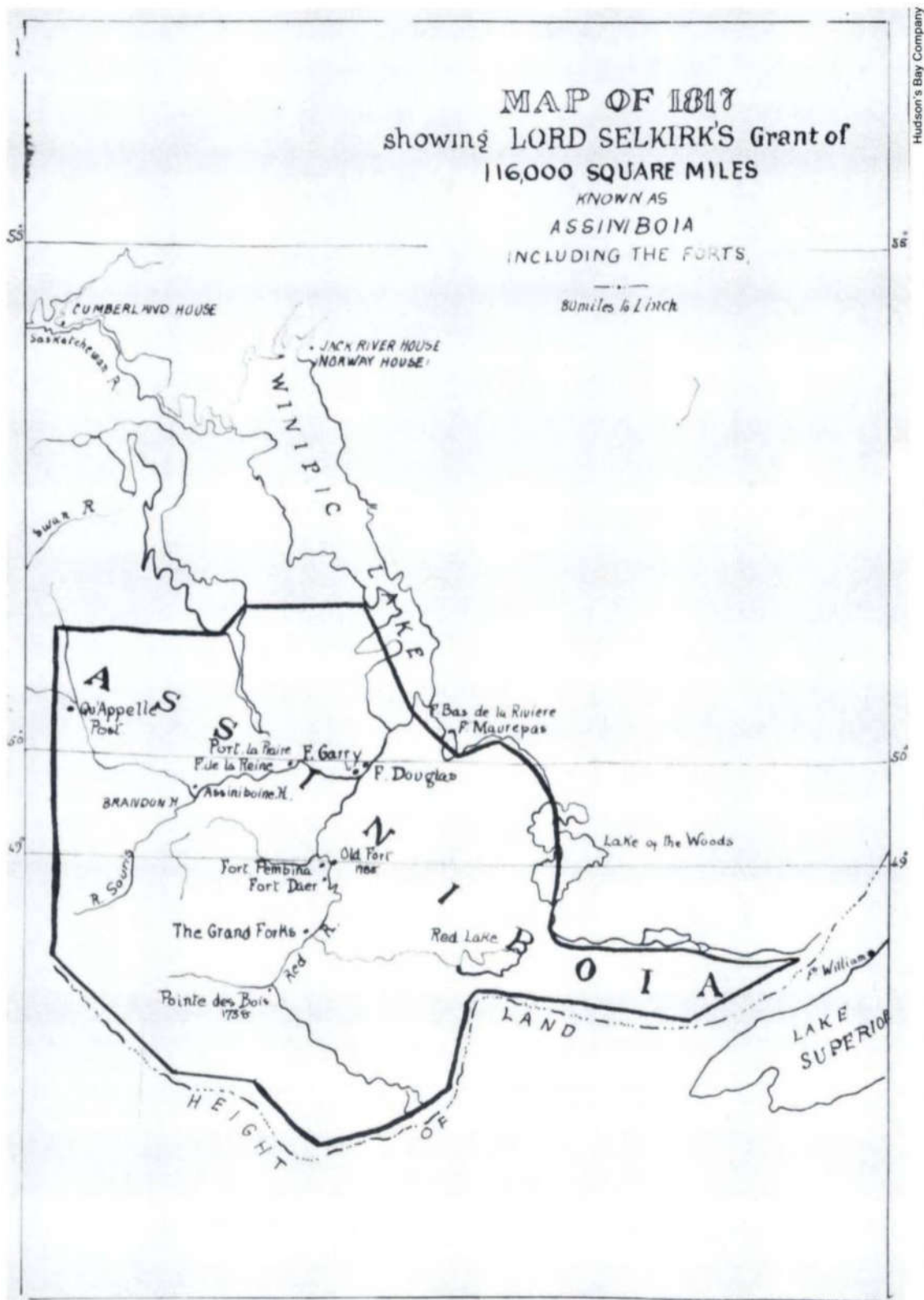
The Red River settlement was again visited with a flood in 1861. As usual in flood years, a heavy snow-pack was followed by a late and sudden thaw. The crest was considerably lower than in 1852, although

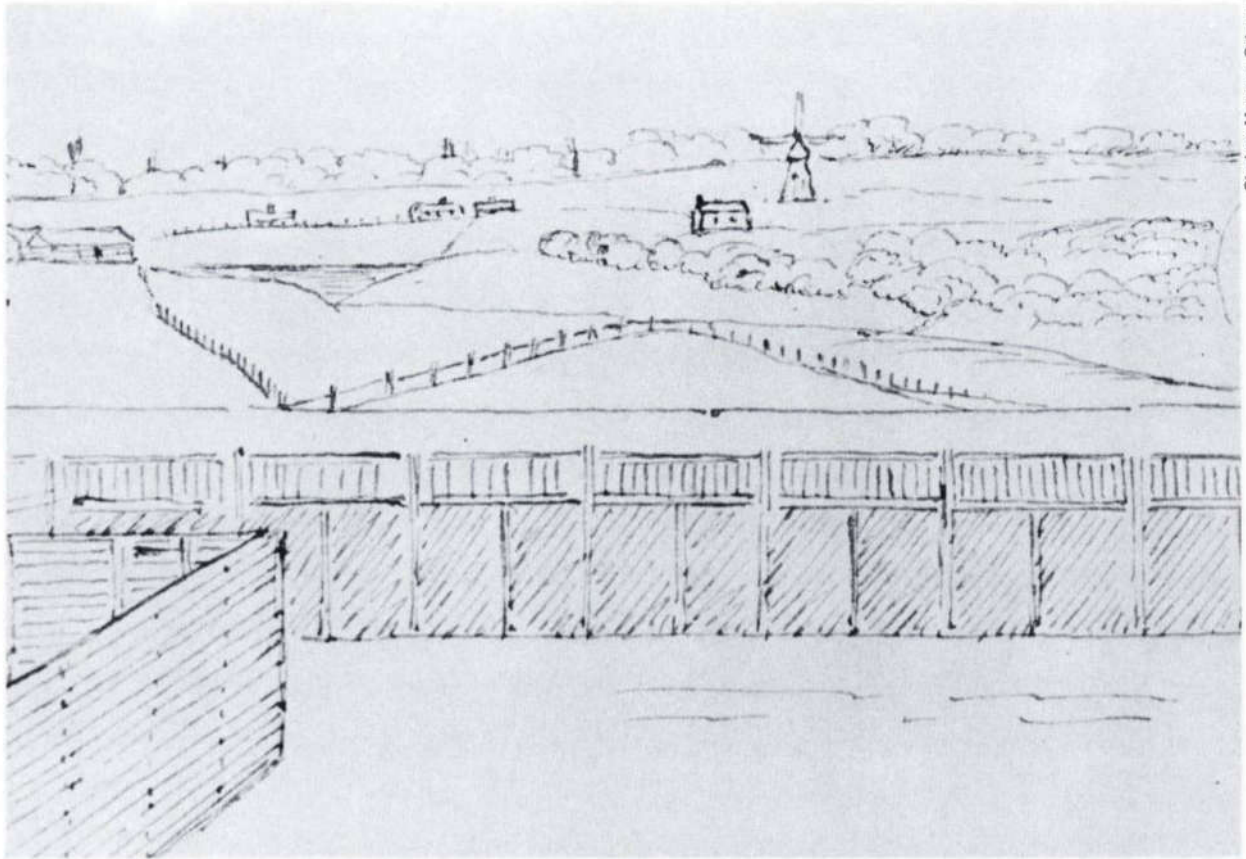
A steamboat on the Red, mid-nineteenth century.

Opposite page: A nineteenth century map that shows the general dimensions of Lord Selkirk's grant of territory.



Hudson's Bay Company





Glenbow Museum, Calgary

An 1847 sketch by George W. Finlay shows the view over the north wall of Upper Fort Garry including the pastoral area which is now a part of downtown Winnipeg.

the waters drove all the settlers along the Red above Upper Fort Garry from their homes and ultimately forced many as far as Middle Church to evacuate. There was no loss of life in 1861, few if any houses were seriously damaged, and fencing again seemed the major problem. As in 1852, those with no grain stocks on hand or who had been unable to remove their grain to higher ground suffered most heavily, but because of the recentness of the 1852 experience most settlers took precautions when it became clear that the water was rising. As in 1826 and 1852, planting was delayed, but as S.P. Matheson observed, "nature seemed to adjust itself to our needs and mishaps, with the result that both grain and vegetables matured in time to supply adequately our wants."

The maximum elevations of the Red River, which at Winnipeg reached 764.11 feet above sea level in 1826, 762.32 feet above sea level in 1852, and 760.07 feet above sea level in 1861, did not again return to anything approaching these levels until 1950. The possibility of serious flooding gradually receded from the minds of all but the most pessimistic old-timers and a few professional engineers, who called in vain for flood control methods. For those who chose to study the

early records, however, several points could emerge. In the first place, apart from 1826, where the height of waters was extreme and the breakup of the ice on both rivers sudden (dynamiting was later used to prevent this particular reoccurrence), the flooding of the Red River basin was a gradual affair, offering sufficient time for the population to evacuate to higher ground. Loss of life was low, and most of the devastation was to property. At the same time, property damage was always more serious for those who lived on the margins of society. In 1852 and to a lesser extent in 1861, those on the margins often resided in the areas of greatest risk. Perhaps most significantly, the Red River settlement snapped back quickly from these natural disasters, often far more readily than those involved anticipated. Flooding provided an immediate disaster, but it was not a long-term impediment to the development of the colony, or to the city which succeeded it. ♦

*J.M. Bumsted teaches history at St. John's College, the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. He is the author of *The People's Clearance*.*

Wilderness Artist

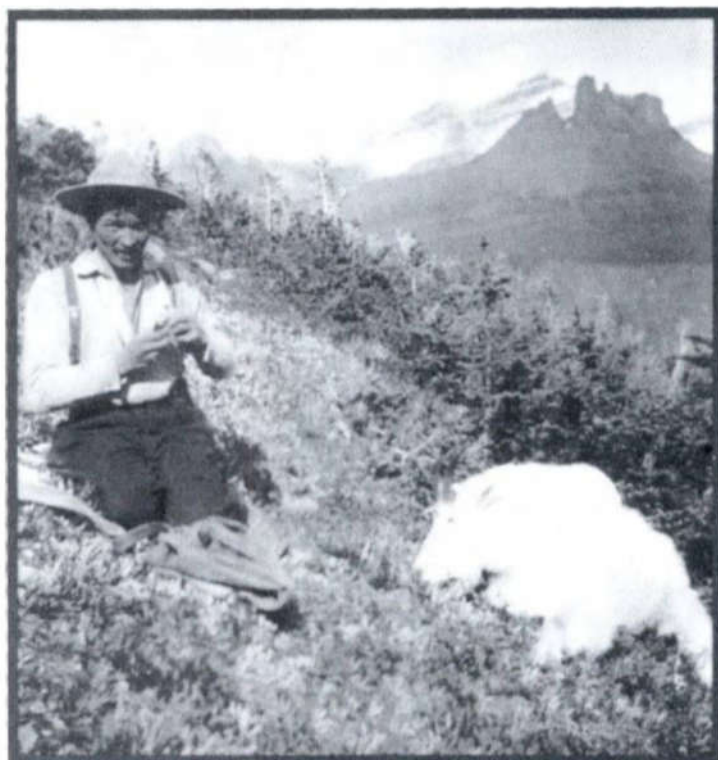
BY DAVID WATMOUGH

CARL RUNGIUS

Painter of the Western Wilderness

By Jon Whyte and E.J. Hart. Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver, 1985. 184 pp., illus. \$45.00.

Carl Rungius was a German-born wildlife painter of the North American West to whom posterity has not been particularly kind. Except to a small group of *cognoscenti* who bought and held on to his works (and have seen their value steadily ascend since his death, in 1959, aged 90) he has remained relatively unknown, a fact that this handsome coffee table opus is patently concerned to offset.



Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

Carl Rungius at work.

The man's life, as its authors trace it from Imperial Germany to turn-of-the-century America — starting with New York and extending across the continent to Wyoming, then up into the Yukon and finally to the Canadian Rockies — is an interesting one. Unfortunately, the depiction, in rather pedestrian prose, doesn't always sustain that impression. Indeed, so lacklustre is the

narrative in parts that this reader succumbed too easily to such random musings as to whether Rungius would have proved as important to animal illustration had photography then had the pre-eminence it has today.

There is more to glean from the pictorial images than from the words in this book and it is from the illustrations that one is able to perceive

Canoe Canada's Arctic

7 - 19 day
expeditions



Fly-in canoe trips into the heart of North America's last great wilderness - the tundra & targa of Canada's Northwest Territories. Discover the warm dry summers, spectacular scenery & unparalleled wildlife concentrations of a land untouched by man. Photograph caribou herds, white wolves, muskox, moose, grizzlies & rich birdlife. Virgin fishing for lake trout, grayling, northern pike.

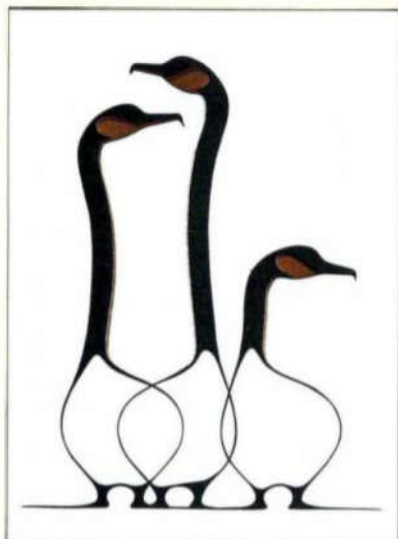
Small groups (8 persons max.) assembled, outfitted & guided by Alex Hall, wildlife biologist & veteran arctic canoeing guide. CAN ACCOMMODATE A LIMITED NUMBER WITH NO PREVIOUS CANOEING EXPERIENCE. Season, June 1 - Sept. 15. Operating the most remote wilderness expeditions in North America since 1974. For brochure write:

CANOE ARCTIC INC.
P.O. Box 1301
Fort Smith, N.W.T. Canada
XOE 0P0

Woodland Indian Artist

Benjamin Chee Chee

Alumni Media is pleased to present 9 reproductions of works by the late Benjamin Chee Chee. These are the only reproductions authorized by the artist's estate.



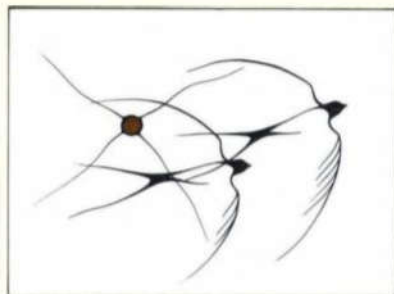
A Friends

A mainly self-taught artist, Chee Chee was a prominent member of the second generation of woodland Indian painters.

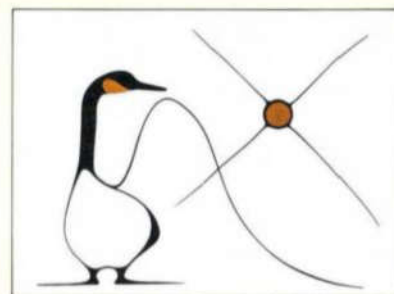
Unlike many of his contemporaries who employed direct and "primitive" means, Chee Chee's work was influenced by modern abstraction. His style reduced line and image in keeping with international modern art.

At the age of 32, at the height of his success, Chee Chee died tragically by suicide.

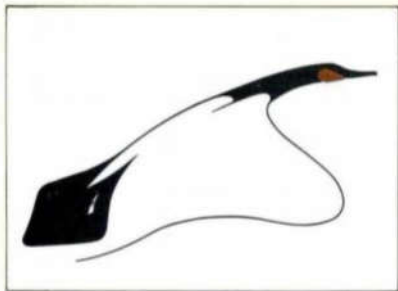
These reproductions are printed on high quality, textured stock and measure 48 cm x 61 cm (19"x24").



B Swallows



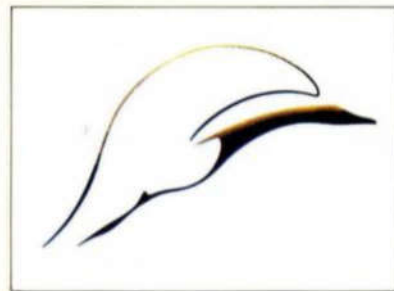
C Good Morning



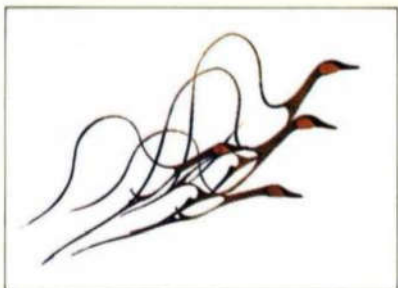
D Proud Male



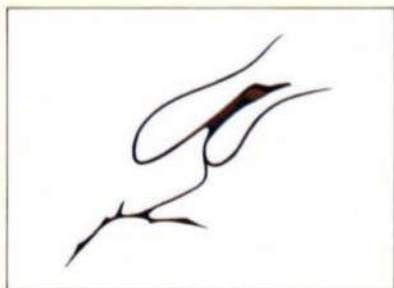
E Mother & Child



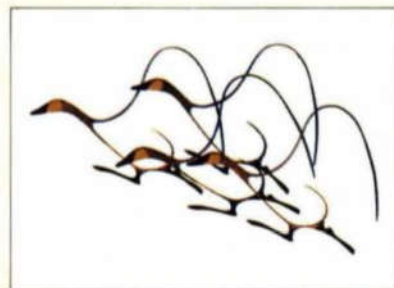
F Sun Bird



G Spring Flight



H Wait For Me



I Autumn Flight

Please send me the following Benjamin Chee Chee print reproductions at \$23.95 each or \$88.00 for any four, plus \$4.95 for handling and shipping (overseas: \$7.50). Ontario residents please add 7% sales tax to combined cost of print(s) plus shipping/handling.

Indicate quantities: A B C D E F G H I

HBC

Cheque or money order to Alumni Media enclosed:

Charge to my MasterCard, Visa or American Express Account No.

Name

Street

Apt.

Expiry Date:

City

Prov.

P. Code

Signature

Alumni Media, 124 Ava Rd., Toronto, Ontario M6C 1W1

UNCONDITIONAL MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE.

If you are not satisfied, please return your purchase to us and your money will be returned (less handling and postage).

a distinct sense of evolution in the work of Rungius — even if it is difficult at times to distinguish between art and craft in his paintings.

In fact it is the reproductions, both coloured and black and white, that are the highlights of the work. The publishers are to be specifically congratulated on this aspect of the volume's production. It is distinctly superior to many of its peers issuing from publishing centres much larger than Vancouver.

Carl Rungius settled for his summers in Banff in the early 1920s and thus Western Canada became progressively dominant to his painterly eye. The rich profusion of artwork in the book underscores the Canadian aspect of this game-animal artist-cum-landscape painter and accounts for much of his more serious output.

In his lifetime, especially both

before and after the Depression, he experienced considerable commercial success and won a number of prestigious awards and prizes from his essentially middlebrow constituency. It is a blemish on the enterprise that too many pages are wasted adumbrating these successes and presenting his fiscal accomplishments in grim prolixity.

The 1950s saw Rungius return to predominantly animal subjects, but by this period proving capable of incorporating a sense of landscape and atmosphere which had been merely strained pastiche in an earlier phase of his art. Pages 149-160 provide, as the text suggests, fine examples of a reconciliation between artist and scientific observer. In my opinion this results in the strongest and most exhilarating sequence of plates throughout the generously illustrated volume.

Overshadowed by the two Western greats — Remington and Russell — Rungius nevertheless played an informing role as a wildlife painter of the American and Canadian West. Thus we Canadians can take distinct pride in producing this measure of literary permanence which draws its strength from the major collections at both the Glenbow Museum in Calgary and the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff. This important record of accomplishment in a highly particularized genre was in fact produced in conjunction with an exhibition of Rungius' work at the Glenbow between November, 1985 and March of this year, 1986.

David Watmough is a Vancouver author and art critic.

Dictionary of Canadian Biography

VOLUME VIII
1851-1860

Francess Halpenny,
general editor

\$60.00

(Laurentian limited edition \$150.00)

The latest volume in this distinguished series profiles the lives of those who lived through the war of 1812, the rebellions of 1837-38, the rapid expansion of the Hudson's Bay Company, and tremendous growth in industry, business, and education.

'A thick and endlessly
fascinating mosaic'
Robert Fulford, *Toronto Star*
'Immensely readable'
Atlantic Advocate



University of Toronto Press

A Culture Under Stress

By Edward S. Rogers

TRADITIONAL OJIBWA RELIGION and Its Historical Changes

By Christopher Vecsey. The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1983. 233 pp., illus. \$12.00.

A POISON STRONGER THAN LOVE The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community

By Anastasia M. Shkilnyk. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1985. 275 pp., illus. \$9.95 paper.

To review Vecsey's *Traditional Ojibwa Religion* and Shkilnyk's *A Poison Stronger than Love* in 800 words is a challenge. Vecsey has attempted without success in thirteen chapters to examine traditional Ojibwa religion and the changes it has undergone due to the European presence. He begins with a chapter on Ojibwa history, followed by Christian missions and the Ojibwa response, the Ojibwa person, the Manitos and Nanabozho and the Ojibwa's relations with the Manitos, and continues with chapters on fasting and visions, disease, health and medicine, religious leadership and the Midewiwin and then discusses diverse religious movements. The climactic and last chapter is naively entitled "The Loss of Ojibwa Religion" as though it had occurred.

A major fault of this volume is that Vecsey is uncritical of his sources, accepting as gospel all that has been published. Furthermore, since he has relied primarily on published material, one cannot say this is a particularly original work. Diligent archival digging would have been necessary to remedy this situation.

His apparent lack of understanding of the discipline of ethnography and a cross-cultural perspective mars this work. And he assumes that all Ojibwa are culturally the same, a situation which most emphatically is not the case except at certain levels of generalization. Finally, he has conducted no in-depth field work (a couple of weeks at Grassy Narrows is all that he mentions) that would allow him to make the authoritative statements about the Ojibwa that he has in this volume. This is not the first time the American Philosophical Society has been guilty of publishing such dubious anthropological works as this (e.g. Lips 1947 Naskapi Law).

A few examples may suffice to make the matter clear. What proof is there that "Ojibwas alienated from the ultimate sources of their existence have suffered from intense bewilderment and lack of direction" (p. 5)? To date it is only an assumption, not a proven fact, that the Midewiwin arose after the arrival of the white man (pp. 6, 156 and 174ff.) in spite of Vecsey's attempts to prove otherwise. There is no conclusive evidence that Ojibwa in the Upper Great Lakes region once occupied communities for more than a few weeks each year and that each was composed of a common totem (p. 8). And furthermore was Long confused about totems — (p. 78)? Long spent several winters in an adjacent area some two hundred years before Vecsey and presumably spoke the language. In this connection, it should be pointed out that "kitche" means more than just "great" (p. 80). Finally, not all Ojibwa altered their rituals under the influence of the whites (p. 114), not all Ojibwa altered village life

because of the fur trade (p. 165), not all Ojibwa practiced the Midewiwin (p. 174) and certainly not all Ojibwa "... are facing a world of teetering complexity without an ultimate source of existence to which they can turn" (p. 205).

A Poison Stronger than Love by Shkilnyk is a much more scholarly work than that by Vecsey. It is intended to be "... a case study in the cause and symptoms of social disintegration..." (p. 2). Shkilnyk, in contrast to Vecsey, spent approximately three years working on the Grassy Narrows Reserve and therefore had first hand experience. She recounts in ten chapters what she has perceived to be the history,

Out-of-Print Canadian Books, Pamphlets and Periodicals

History
Literature
Biography
Exploration
Art etc.

Catalogues Free on Request

Huron-Canadians Books
(Helen & John Wray)

705-435-7255
Box 685, Alliston, Ontario L0M 1A0



An encampment of the Midewiwin, sweat lodge at centre.

culture and effects of European contact, especially the relocation of the reserve in 1963 and the discovery of mercury contamination of the Wabigoon-English River system seven years later, on the people of Grassy Narrows, Ontario, a community that has received a great deal of scrutiny by both levels of government, the press and academics.

Shkilnyk's grasp of Indian history is weak, relying, as she does, on dubious speculations and undocumented statements (p. 54 Ojibwa migrations, p. 88 cross-cousin marriage, p. 96 the Grassy Narrows and Pekangikum association, and p. 110 the dominance of the H B C).

Although her statements (often repetitive) about the drastic losses in the culture of the Indians (i.e. p. 32 puberty ritual, pp. 45, 46 and 84 extended family, pp. 65 and 68 territories for trapping, hunting and gathering, p. 66 clan based residence pattern, p. 75 Indian time, p. 78 vision quest, p. 86 naming ceremony, pp. 100, 102 and 103 traditional leadership, p. 104 an egalitarian society, p. 137 life on the trapline, p. 156 food producers) may be correct, the emphasis on relocation from the old reserve to the

new in 1963 and mercury "poisoning" seven years later as the cause (p. 3) is to forget that similar changes were taking place among many Indians on many reserves throughout Eastern Canada at this time while at the same time retaining a distinctive identity.

Shkilnyk has not shown, as she stated on page 10, that social conditions are far worse at Grassy Narrows than among other Indian bands in the area. Where are the figures? Such an approach to a serious topic mars her work. Also her views on the involvement of others, such as AMOG, in this drama involving the Indians of northwestern Ontario do not aid in our understanding of what really happened during the 1960s and 70s and may not be all that objective. The full story has yet to be written. Yet Shkilnyk's publication and all the others on the topic make one think that maybe the problems that the Indians face are really due to the increasing presence of both levels of government, the press, the missionaries, the racists and the academics.

Dr. Rogers is Head of the Ethnology Department at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

A FUR TRADER'S PHOTOGRAPHS

A.A. CHESTERFIELD
IN THE
DISTRICT OF UNGAVA
1901-4

William C. James

A WAY OF LIFE

now gone is captured in these 128 photographs, recorded by the only white man living among the Cree and Inuit at the turn of the century in the Hudson's Bay Company's most northerly outpost.

\$24.95



McGill-Queen's University Press
63A St George Street, Toronto M5S 1A6

THE PACKET

Letters to and from The Editor

Into the Wind, by Starlight

However brief, winter on Bodmin Moor is a sharp reminder of what real winter can be.

In another winter, 46 years ago, Ebrulik and I started off on a circuit of his 250-mile trap line in north-west Alaska. At that time I was a young anthropologist living with the Eskimos at Tigara, Point Hope, a

village at the very tip of a low spit running out into the Arctic Ocean from Cape Thomsen some 200 miles north of Bering Strait.

In the mid-day dawn light the village was barely recognizable on the flat white snow-swept space, surrounded by pressure ridges built up with great blocks of sea ice. Semi-subterranean houses were buried under drifting snow or covered with snow blocks. Only storage racks made of whale jaw bones which held the upturned skin boats, sleds, meat caches, and other gear, stood out against a white world. In the long hours of darkness a faint glimmer of seal oil lamps could be seen through glazed windows and sky lights.

Ebrulik Roc was a young Eskimo who had been taken to Hollywood to act in a film about Eskimos, and had made what was to him a fortune

— enough money to buy the biggest dog team in the village, 13 handsome huskies.

We could expect a rough trip across the tundra, in the coldest month of the year, with persistent northeast gales. In preparation, the women of Ebrulik's family had made for us sets of parkas, pants, and boots of caribou winter skins; one set worn with fur against our skins, and another set with the fur turned outside. Over all were white hooded parkas made of coarse heavy cotton. There were also beautifully made fur mittens fastened to the parkas with raw hide thongs so that they could not be lost.

The whole village was at the time critically short of food in the poor season for seal hunting. We knew that we needed the sled heavily loaded with seal carcasses to feed ourselves and the dogs before we

Cover Story

Of all the large rivers of Canada, the Fraser is probably the most dangerous to navigate. Fifteen years after Sir Alexander Mackenzie discovered it on his voyage to the Pacific, two other Northwesters, John Stuart and American-born Simon Fraser explored its tumultuous lower course to the sea. Barely escaping with their lives, they decided it could never be used as a trade route.

Twenty years later, in 1828, Governor George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company set out to discover if their decision was correct. Fort Langley, near the mouth of the Fraser, had recently been established by Chief Factor James McMillan, and the Indians had given him an optimistic report of the river's navigability. If their reports were true, the new fort would be the logical place for the Company's Pacific Coast depot.

With Archibald McDonald, Chief Trader in charge of Fort Langley, Simpson crossed the continent from Hudson Bay. The party travelled via Norway House, Fort Chipewyan and Fort St. James; and on 6 October embarked at Kamloops in two canoes and a boat for the descent of the Thompson and Fraser rivers.

The going was fast and furious. Several times the travellers were in danger of being flung into the rushing torrent. From McDonald's terse entries in his journal we can get a glimpse of the perils through which they ran. Our cover picture shows him shooting one of the rapids above the present town of Yale (named after James Murray Yale, who travelled in the other canoe).

Five months later, Simpson wrote to the Governor and Committee: "I should consider the passage down, to be certain Death, in nine attempts out of ten. I shall therefore no longer talk of it as a navigable stream."

The idea of using Fort Langley as the depot was therefore abandoned, and Fort Vancouver served that purpose until 1849, when Pacific Coast headquarters were transferred to Fort Victoria.

Painting by A. Sherriff Scott.



Hudson's Bay Company



With Ebrulik on the trail.

could venture out into the tundra. Ebrulik gambled on finding seals in the open water at Cape Thompson where the Arctic current swung in against that rocky headland. Thus, our first journey was along the coast to the Cape, in a blinding snow storm.

We were lucky. In one day we shot six seals, and retrieved them all with a device known as a *munaktun*. That is a long coil of walrus hide line attached to a drop-shaped wooden float set with iron hooks. We cast the float out beyond drifting carcasses, snagged them and drew them in to the shore ice.

The Tigara people do not make the classic snow block domed houses of the Central Eskimos. For them, a shelter on the trail is simply a burrow dug into a snow bank where the snow is solidly impacted by strong winds. That small dark hole is heated by a seal oil lamp, or by a Swedish pressure stove fueled with petrol. The dogs make their own burrows in the snow.

We left the burrow of our first camp in darkness, hitched bad-tempered dogs to the sled load of seals, and worked our way up the escarpment to a vast plateau with no landmarks — nothing to break a flat endless expanse. The stream beds of summer had disappeared beneath wind driven and hard packed snow, so hard our sled left almost no track.

In the dim starlight before the new year sun began to roll along just under the horizon at midday we could see a ghostly horizon where the stars ended and the dogs strung out ahead. All else was a sea of darkness.

On that flat, hard snow the 13 dogs could move our heavy sled at a steady trot, about the speed of a slowly running man. One of us stood on the rear ends of the flat runners holding the handlebars of the sled while the other ran along side, also holding on to the sled. We changed places every few minutes, breathing hard and just beginning to sweat. I was puzzled about how Ebrulik could possibly know where he was going, and how he could find the camp of one small family some fifty miles from Cape Thompson to which we were going. He explained that his lead dog, a bitch as usual, was set on a bearing marked by the rifles on the snow. The prevailing winds had marked our compass on that hard packed surface. In spite of the wind in her teeth the bitch never wavered from her course.

Ebrulik had warned me of the February cold on the tundra, but I was not prepared for the bitter northeast wind that we must face outward bound. There was no thermometer and I could only guess a temperature of 20 or 30 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. Our parka hoods were trimmed with wolf ruff

and a wolverine fringe, but our faces were still partly exposed when facing the wind. We had to stop and remove the wolf skin belly bands from two of the dogs so that we would tie them around our faces under the hoods for added protection.

The precarious nature of that kind of winter became vivid when I struck one boot, perhaps on a sled runner or on a piece of ice, and cut a small tear in the soft sole. Ebrulik at once stopped the dogs, dug a needle and thread out of his tool bag, and sewed on a neat patch. It was obvious that if snow got into a boot, melted and dampened it, the foot would freeze in minutes — and a frozen foot out there was fatal. Later in the day I noticed a white spot on Ebrulik's cheek. Again we stopped and he turned his face away from the wind to rub his cheek with the soft fur of a mitten. The white spot turned red and he adjusted the fur bellyband to cover it.

Long after dark, in glittering starlight, the dogs began to yelp, the leader swung off to the left, and our pace quickened to a dead run. They had smelled the reindeer camp and in a few minutes we were being thumped and embraced by the reindeer herder and his wife. The dogs were unharnessed, fed with pieces of seal meat chopped from a frozen carcass with an axe, and then left to burrow in the snow. We crawled into the herder's snow burrow through a tunnel to find an open space no more than eight or nine feet in diameter and just high enough to sit up. It was heated by a seal oil lamp on which a reindeer stew was cooking. A baby boy, less than two years old, dressed in a short skin shirt which left his bottom bare, crawled about on the reindeer skin-covered floor.

Reindeer were first introduced into Alaska from Siberia at the end of the nineteenth century to feed stranded whalers near Point Barrow. Later, Lapps were brought from Europe to teach the Eskimo in the care and training of domesticated animals. They are much smaller than caribou and markedly different in colour. In 1940 most Eskimo villages along the Arctic coast of

Alaska owned reindeer which they kept inland under the care of a herder whose job was to protect them against wolves and also to move them regularly to different feeding grounds to preserve the growth of lichens upon which they feed. Hence this lonely little family, isolated for most of the winter far inland. I cannot remember the names of the young couple with whom we stayed, but I soon christened their small son "terrible Charlie". At first he was afraid of the queer looking white man and kept his distance. But a storm had us snowbound there for three days, and Charlie lost his fear of the stranger. Eskimo children are not disciplined until they are two and a half years old, not even housebroken. With his short shirt and bare bottom he became more a menace than the storm outside. The three Eskimos were reduced to tears of laughter when Charlie imitated my facial expressions.

There was barely room for the four adults to lie on the skin covered floor in sleeping bags. It was very awkward to strip off our heavy skin clothing in order to sleep naked in the fur bags, but it was essential to keep the clothes free of sweat at night. Even with the tight fit in the burrow, the wife always managed to make tea on the lamp each morning, and to pass it around to the rest of us before we made the effort to dress. During the storm we lay and talked, slept, or watched the herder carve a reindeer harness collar from a bit of driftwood found on the shore — complicated curves and an intricate design which finished as a work of art.

The snow storm blew over by the fourth day and it was again possible to travel. However, we decided to spend that day training reindeer to the sled. That was the only time I have seen Eskimos use sled deer, in the manner of the Siberian Chuchchee and Lapps. One deer was harnessed to a light sled and controlled by a single line. Unlike caribou, reindeer are so small that a man can pick them up, throw them to the ground, and hold them while being harnessed — the only way of handling an untrained animal. It was a great sport. One man rode on the

sled, unable to control or stop the deer until it was exhausted and stood quietly with forelegs spread, head down, puffing clouds of steam. Then it could be pulled around, headed toward the camp and the herd, and when rested, raced back the way it had come. Deer travel much faster than dogs but do not have the endurance, as they must be rested and fed with lichens at regular intervals.

The following day was to change all our plans for the trap line. We took off in the starlight, again heading into the northeast wind, toward the camp of Ebrulik's partner on the trap line, some 50 or 60 miles away. New snow was blowing into our faces making travel even more difficult — even worse, into the nostrils of the dogs. Often we were forced to stop to dig encrusted ice from their noses so that they could breathe. These were not pet dogs. Many were cross-bred with wolves and so dangerous that we could approach them only with a short length of chain to lash them if they turned to snap. Usually the rattle of the chain was enough to keep them quiet. The greatest danger was a slip and a fall while handling them.

Some time during that day we spotted the carcass of a caribou, killed by wolves but not entirely eaten. With an axe we could chop flakes of meat and back fat from the rock-hard animal for the dogs and ourselves. The physical need for fat in that cold makes chips of frozen back fat more tasty than a chocolate bar. Later that day we noticed that our axe had slipped its mooring on the sled load and was gone. Ebrulik looked worried, but cheered up with the thought that his partner would surely have another axe at his camp.

All of us, dogs and men, were on our last legs when we reached Antonio's camp, long after dark and again in starlight. All was dark and abandoned — no dogs, no glimmer of light in the snow burrow, and even that was drifted in. Worst of all, no axe. Without it our granite-hard seals were useless — no food and body warmth from fat for dogs or men. Ebrulik and I, with some of the less wild dogs, crawled into the

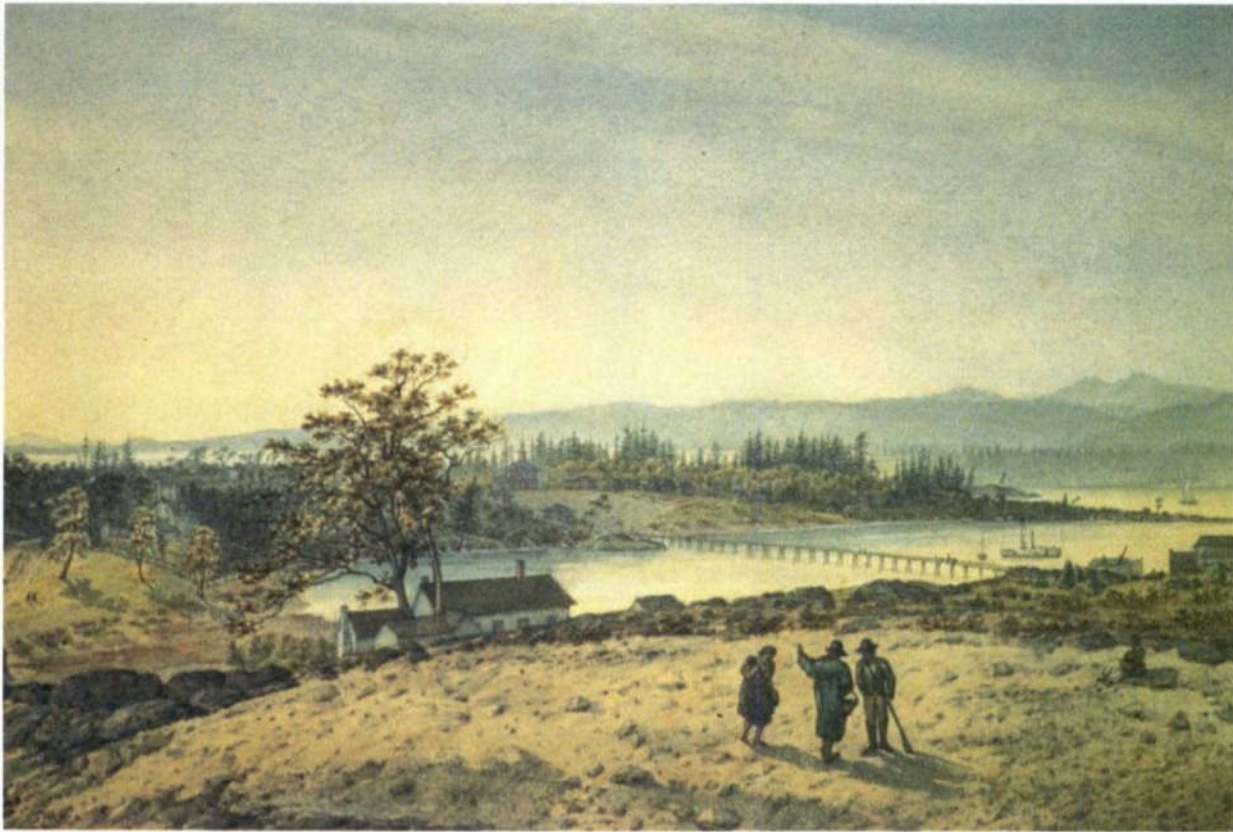
half-filled burrow, at least out of the wind, to get what rest we could.

All thought of the trap line was abandoned. The urgent problem was to reach the nearest point where we could hope to find people. Ebrulik was quite sure that we could find a family on the shore north of Point Hope where there was open water for seal hunting, not so far as Tigara, and within one long day's travel. We left long before there was any sign of dawn, heading west with the wind astern.

Looking back, I think that was the longest day of my life. After the first few hours time stood still. Fatigue, hunger, cold and fear turned me into a zombie, just able to follow Ebrulik's orders. Long since, I had learned to travel in the far North only with Eskimos and never with other white men. It is their land, they know what to do and never get rattled. Moreover, they are, for the most part, extraordinarily intelligent and dependable people, the result of hundreds of generations of natural selection. Ebrulik pushed us and the dogs to the limit of endurance, never beyond, with a clear sense of what we could do without collapse. That is about all I can remember of most of that day — commands to halt, and to move on just when I was about to lie down on the snow to sleep.

At last I was aware of yelping dogs, a quickened pace, and the distant howling of other dogs. We had arrived. There were people, a camp, food, warmth, and the ever boisterous welcome of an Eskimo family. Best of all was a large hot stew of ptarmigan. Not even the hairy claw of one bird caught in my teeth could detract from the best stew I have ever eaten. I thought of the dogs bolting strips of dried salmon, and sent up a little prayer of thanks to working dogs who would as soon eat me as the salmon, but had the endurance to save my life.

**Froelich Rainey,
Director Emeritus,
The University Museum,
Philadelphia.
Oldhay, Altarnun,
Launceston, Cornwall,
England.**



James Bay and the "Birdcages", Victoria 1860s, by E.T. Coleman

British Columbia, Yesterday

To mark the beginning of Expo '86 the next issue of *The Beaver* will travel into British Columbia's colourful past with articles on the struggle to explore Vancouver Island in 1864, an ill-advised attempt to lay a telegraph cable to Europe via the West Coast and Russia, a vice-regal visit to the B.C. wilderness in 1876 and an account, illustrated with rare photographs, of the rise of Vancouver and the last days of its mighty trees. These and other articles on historic British Columbia will appear in the June-July special West Coast issue of *The Beaver*.

When you think of rum our taste should be at the tip of your tongue.

Whether you choose Hudson's Bay White Rum, or Hudson's Bay Jamaica Rum, or Hudson's Bay Demerara Rum, we think you'll enjoy our smooth taste. Best of all, our rums are priced right, too. And that should keep our taste at the tip of your tongue.

